FRIENDSHIP

VOL. I.

OUIDA'S NOVELS.

Uniform Edition, crown 8vo. cloth extra, 5s. each.

HELD IN BONDAGE.
STRATHMORE.
CHANDOS: A Novel.
UNDER TWO FLAGS.
IDALIA: A Romance.
TRICOTRIN.
CECIL CASTLEMAINE'S GAGE.
PUCK: His Vicissitudes, Adventures, &c.
FOLLE FARINE.
A DOG OF FLANDERS.
PASCARÈL: Only a Story.
TWO LITTLE WOODEN SHOES.
SIGNA.
IN A WINTER CITY.
ARIADNÊ.

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY, W.

FRIENDSHIP

A STORY

BY OUIDA

AUTHOR OF 'PUCK' 'ARIADNÊ' 'SIGNA' ETC.

'Si l'emploi de la Comédie est de corriger les vices, je ne vois pas par quelle raison il y en aura de privilégiés' MOLIÈRE

IN THREE VOLUMES—VOL. I.

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1878

[*The right of translation is reserved*]

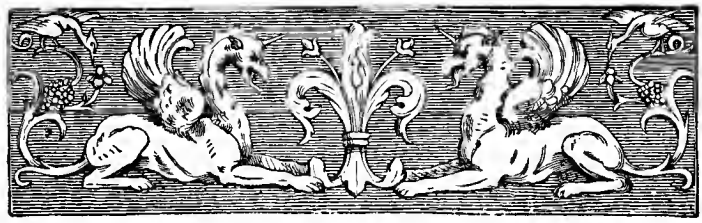
LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

À PROPOS.

A FROG that dwelt in a ditch spat at a worm that bore a lamp.

'Why do you do that?' said the glowworm.

'Why do you shine?' said the frog.



AVANT-PROPOS.

—♦—

When Zeus, half in sport and half in cruelty, made man, young Hermês, who, as all Olympus knew, was for ever at some piece of mischief, insisted on meddling with his father's work, and got leave to fashion the human ear out of a shell that he chanced to have by him, across which he stretched a fine cobweb that he stole from Arachne. But he hollowed and twisted the shell in such a fashion that it would turn back all sounds except very loud blasts that Falsehood should blow on a brazen horn, whilst the impenetrable web would keep out all such whispers as Truth could send up from the depths of her well.

Hermês chuckled as he rounded the curves of his ear, and fastened it on to the newly-made Human Creature.

'So shall these mortals always hear and believe the thing that is not,' he said to himself in glee—knowing that the box he would give to Pandora would not bear more confused and complex woes to the hapless earth than this gift of an ear to man.

But he forgot himself so far that, though two ears were wanted, he only made one.

Apollo, passing that way, marked the blunder, and resolved to avenge the theft of his milk-white herds which had led him such a weary chase through Tempe.

Apollo took a pearl of the sea and hollowed it, and strung across it a silver string from his own lyre, and with it gave to man one ear by which the voice of Truth should reach the brain.

'You have spoilt all my sport,' said the boy Hermês, angry and weeping.

'Nay,' said the elder brother, with a smile. 'Be comforted. The brazen trumpets will be sure to drown the whisper from the well, and ten thousand mortals to one, be sure, will always turn by choice your ear instead of mine.'

FRIENDSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

'It is a pull, sister,' said the elder Miss Moira, of Craig Moira, to the younger.

'It is a pull, sister. But we promised Archie.'

'We promised Archie, and I'm wishful to see how she gets on wi' the man that sold carpets.'

So the carriage, bearing the Misses Moira, of Craig Moira, their plaids, pugs, ear-trumpets, and courier, continued its course across the Roman Campagna, and up the steep and wooded roads that led to the old Castle of Fiordelisa.

The Misses Moira, of Moira, lived on their own lands in Caithness, were very rich, very ugly, very eccentric, spoke with a strong native accent, and delivered their opinions uncalled for; two of their sister's children were respectively the Duchess of Forfar, and the Marquis of Fingal; the younger was the echo of the elder—both wore spectacles, both were deaf; and neither ever forgot that the Moiras, of Craig Moira, had the right to sit before their sovereign, and were allied with half the bluest blood and highest names in Great Britain.

They were now about to call on one of their connections, and gazed anxiously through their spectacles for the Castle of Fiordelisa, where she dwelt. Fiordelisa came at last in sight, a grey, rambling, and ancient pile, set amidst cypress and ilex woods, with its gardens straying down into its farm-lands in Italian fashion, covering hills and plains with corn and vine and olive.

'A braw place this, but ill-kept,' said the elder Miss Moira, as they entered a dark avenue of ancient oaks, 'and has the idolatrous emblems even at the very gates.'

She shut her eyes not to see the Pietà let into the wall under the woods, and kept them shut lest she should see any more such signs. They had been brought into the land of such mummeries under protest by the dangerous illness of a beloved sister, mother of her young Grace of Forfar, at Naples, and the sister being restored to health, they were hastening away from the scene of abominations, only pausing a few days in Rome because the younger of them was somewhat of an invalid, and unequal to rapid travelling.

The sudden stoppage of the carriage made the elder Miss Moira open her eyes. They had arrived at the entrance door of Fiordelisa.

Between the centre columns of a beautiful loggia, built by Bramante, there was standing a handsome, black-browed woman, a little in advance of two gentlemen, who stood one on each side of her, awaiting the arrival of the guests.

She was the Lady Joan Challoner.

With ardour and cordial eagerness of welcome

she rushed down the stone steps and darted to the carriage.

'Oh, dearest Miss Moira, how kind of you! And dear Miss Elizabeth, too. How sorry I am not to be in Rome! We go down for good the day after to-morrow. If I had only known you were coming there, of course I should have gone in last week. Let me present them to you—Mr. Challoner; Prince Ioris. Come in, pray, out of the sun. Yes, even in November it is oppressively warm. You must be overladen with all those plaids. Robert——Io——'

'Enchanté de l'honneur de vous voir, mesdames,' murmured a tall, graceful, dark-eyed person, with a sweet smile and a low bow, coming forward on to the first step, and offering his arm to the old gentlewoman.

'Hoot toot, man! Canna ye speak yer own tongue?' said the elder Miss Moira sharply, accepting the arm of her host, as she thought, and entering the house with him, whilst her sister followed with their hostess, who was talking eagerly into her ear-trumpet; the other gentleman, who had a Scotch face and a German

manner, and looked like a fusion between a Leipzig philologist and an American senator, made a feeble attempt to offer his arm as well, but hesitated, not seeing very well how to do it, and halted midway, making believe to hold back a barking Clumber spaniel.

The whole party passed into the loggia, and thence into the first great apartment opening out from it, where some twenty other people, English and American residents of Rome, had been gathered to do honour to the Misses Moira, of Moira, and were taking tea, eating grapes, and looking at pictures and china. Seated, the two ladies looked round the noble tapestried guest-chamber with some bewilderment and some vague displeasure.

'So ye're Joan Perth-Douglas that was?' said the elder Miss Moira, bringing her spectacles to bear on her hostess. 'Ye were a slip of twelve when we saw ye last—twenty years ago, aye, twenty years and more. Will ye tell me why your good husband talks French to us?'

'Allow me, madam,' murmured the gentleman, who looked like a Leipzig philologist and

an American senator, offering to relieve her of her plaids.

'Don't be officious, man!' said Miss Moira, sharply. 'My sister's no richt in the lungs, and your master's house is draughty.'

The gentleman shrank back.

'I never saw a Scot so dark as your good husband, Joan,' pursued the elder Miss Moira, adhering to her original thoughts, sternly fastening her glasses upon the graceful and dark-eyed personage, who murmured a soft and perplexed 'Plaît-il, Madame?'

'Have you lived among Papists till you've forgot every word of the tongue you were born to, sir?' asked Miss Moira of him, believing that she was addressing a fellow-countryman.

'You must be inconvenienced by all those plaids, madam. Do allow me——' commenced in a kind of despair the other person who had been scouted.

'Canna ye wait till ye're spoke to!' said the lady, turning on him in wrath at the interference. 'Canna ye teach your servants better ways, Leddy Joan, than to gird at a body like that?

A very brown man for a Scot, your husband, though extraordinary well-favoured. How comes it he canna talk his own tongue?'

'That is not my husband,' said the Lady Joan hurriedly, with a flush rising on her face and a laugh to her eyes. 'You are mistaken, dear Miss Moira. I introduce people so badly; this is only Ioris, a friend, you know. My husband, Mr. Challoner, you've been taking for a servant, and scolding about your plaids.'

The well-bred twenty people who were taking tea at Fiordelisa were not so perfectly well-bred that they could help a little titter as they listened.

'Prut-tut!' cried the elder Miss Moira, with her head higher in the air, being a person who never recognised her own errors, let them be made manifest as they might. '*This* man received us, certainly he received us, at the door (I am correct, sister?). Certainly he received us, Leddy Joan. If *you* be master here,' she demanded with sudden vigour of the gentleman whom she was informed was Mr. Challoner, as he returned with a cup of tea and a cream-jug—'if

you be master here, why don't you behave like it? Are you master, eh?'

Mr. Challoner, conscious of the twenty well-bred people and the irrepressible ill-bred titter, begged Miss Moira to tell him if she took much sugar or little.

'I can sugar for myself!' said that lady with asperity. 'So *you* are Leddy Joan's husband, are you? You don't seem to conduct yourself like it. But I thought the other was very dark for a Scot.'

'Do you take cream, madam?' murmured Mr. Challoner, bending his back stiffly over the silver jug, whilst Miss Moira stared with stony gaze at the coronets and coats of arms on the chairs.

'Whose quarterings are those?' she demanded. 'They're none known north o' Tweed, nor north o' Thames either for that matter; the shape o' the shield ——'

'Dear Miss Moira, allow me ——,' said the Lady Joan, avoiding heraldry by bringing up a small division of the twenty well-bred people for presentation. But Miss Moira was not to be so

lightly diverted from her purpose. Having bent her head as many times as politeness required, she retained her grasp on Mr. Challoner, and returned to her original investigations. 'A fine place,' she resumed, letting her spectacles rove from the timber roof to the mosaic floor; 'a fine place; is it your own?'

Mr. Challoner murmured inarticulately, and stooped for the sugar-tongs.

'Bought it?' said Miss Moira sharply.

'No—not precisely.'

'Hired it?'

'Not exactly. That is, at least ——'

Mr. Challoner shifted his eyeglass, and, being an exact man, paused to find an exact word.

'Oh, my gude soul, then if ye've na bought it and na hired it, it's na yours at all, and what for be ye speering to ask us into it?'

Mr. Challoner wondered to himself why an unkind Providence would move old maiden ladies from their own safe ingle-nooks by grey Atlantic shores, and muttered something of 'a friend, an old friend.'

'Oh, it's the dark man's, is it? He don't

look old,' said Miss Moira, 'and you and your good leddy live in it out of friendship. Is that the custom in this papistical country, pray, sir?'

Mr. Challoner murmured that he thought it was the custom—'the houses were so large, the nobility were so poor ——'

'And has *he* a good lady? What does she say to it? Certainly, Leddy Joan asked us out here as to her *own* place. Quite clearly—her own place. I am correct, sister?'

'Quite correct, sister. Her own place.'

'Ioris is not married,' said Mr. Challoner, wondering if he could drop the sugar-tongs again without too much awkwardness. 'He is a good fellow. We are very much attached to him. Will you like to see my greenhouses? I am curious in the *Nymphœas—cyanea—cœrulea—rubra.*'

'A pond-lily's a puir feckless taste for a man,' said Miss Moira severely. 'Archie asked us to come and see his daughter, and so we came. But certainly when she wrote to us she said her "own place"—most distinctly her own place.'

'Oh, she has got into the habit of calling it so; she has done so much for it ——'

'But if it be the young man's ——'

Lady Joan Challoner begged at that moment to present to Miss Moira an Anglican clergyman.

The Anglican clergyman disposed of, Miss Moira, of Craig Moira, returned to the charge.

'Eh, but it must be a perilous experiment—twa masters under one roof.'

'Eh, it must, indeed,' murmured the younger Miss Moira. 'Mony voices make muckle strife.'

'Ay, they do. Tell me now, do you twa good gentlemen never fash one another?'

'Never,' said Mr. Challoner cordially, but his cold light eyes fell as he spoke.

'Then ye're just no human, sir,' said Miss Moira with emphasis; 'and Joan Perth-Douglas had always a sharp tongue of her own. Perth-Douglas women never were easy to live with. You seem a quiet body yourself, but still——'

'Let me show you my wife's fowls. The fame of the poultry of Craig Moira——' commenced Mr. Challoner.

'Still, I think you're no wise, and so I'll tell Archie,' continued Miss Moira, not to be moved

even by praise of her poultry-yard. 'It's a queer way of living, and certainly she said her own place, "her own place," and ye'll no take offence for I always speak my mind, but that Papist's a deal too bonny to look at, and Leddy Joan's a young woman still.'

'My dear madam! I have not the most distant idea of your meaning——'

'Then ye're just a fule, sir,' said Miss Moira sharply.

'Will you look at my wife's poultry? She has some spangled bantams that——'

'Eh? Joan Perth-Douglas has taken to cocks and hens and bubbly-jocks, has she? Weel, there's no accounting for conversions. Perth-Douglas women were always a handful. I've known three generations of them, and they always were masterful. Dear douce Archie never daured say his soul was his own. Yes, I'll come and see your chicks and stove plants. But how can they be yours if the place is the Papist's?'

'It was a tumble-down old barrack. We have spent a good deal on it. One is always glad to

do good to a friend,' murmured Mr. Challoner, a little vaguely, offering his arm to his tormentor.

'Humph!' said the elder Miss Moira with a sniff.

'We are quite farmers here, you know,' Mr. Challoner continued, leading the way through courts and chambers to the open air. 'The whole thing had gone to rack and ruin when we took it in hand. Italians are so improvident, and the national habits are so wasteful. But my wife's energy is wonderful; whatever she undertakes prospers——'

'Humph!' said the elder Miss Moira once more. 'And the handsome Papist, is he grateful to ye for her energy?'

'Oh, don't talk about gratitude. There is no question of that! We are always glad to be of use to our friends, and Ioris is an excellent fellow. Ask Lord Archie.'

Lord Archie was an idol of Craig Moira, and his word was law there. Miss Moira was softened by it, and her suspicions were mollified. She consented to be conducted through the green-

houses, praised the bantams, and only sniffed a little as she passed the open door of the castle chapel, where some peasants were going in for vespers. She returned in a more amiable frame of mind to her sister and her sofa, and relented enough to take a fresh cup of tea and some fruit, which was handed her with exquisite grace by the Prince Ioris. Miss Moira's eyes through their spectacles followed the Prince Ioris to the other end of the large reception-room.

'He's an elegant-made man and a taking one,' she said to her host; 'and I think ye're no wise to live in the same house with him. Oh, ye've no need to glower and look glum: an old body like me can tell truth without fashin' anybody, and ye know that we and Archie's people have foregathered all our lives, and it never was hid from us that Joan Perth-Douglas was masterful, and had her cantrips. Lord, man! Do ye think they'd have wedded her to a mere decent body like you, if she hadn't been a handful? Not they; they're proud-stomached, and ye sold carpets and the like in Bagdad.'

'Really, madam——' Mr. Challoner shifted

his eyeglass, and felt that this kind of amiability was worse to bear than the previous antagonism.

'Hoot! it's no sort of use giving yourself bobberies with us. We know all about you,' said Miss Moira pleasantly. 'Your forebears were decent folks, dwellers on my cousin Allandale's lands on the Border for mony a generation, pious canny bodies, but sma' traders all. I mind well when I was a bit lassie, and staying at Allandale's, buying tapes and pins and what not, at your grandmother's little shop. She sold snuff and letter papers, and had the post, and sold stamps as weel—twa bawbee stamps they were in those days. Ye mind it too, don't ye, sister?'

'Richt well, sister. She sold sweeties too.'

'Lord, man, it's sma' blame to ye. Your folk were all decent folk in the Cheviots, and true believers. But I'll not deny that when ye stuck up on your countin' house stool so high that ye mated with Archie's daughter, we did set our necks stiff, and——'

Mr. Challoner threw down a piece of majolica. It belonged to the house, and would cost him

nothing, and the crash of the falling vase spared him more recollections of Allandale.

'Sister, we must be going. The sun's well-nigh down,' said the elder Miss Moira, when the majolica was picked up. 'Now, sir, take an old woman's word, and don't disremember that your good leddy's a Perth-Douglas, and Perth-Douglas women are always like bucking fillies; and the Papist's got a face o' grace and a pretty way with him. Oh, you may get on your high horse as ye like! Sense is sense. Still, I'm glad to see ye have such a trust in your wife, and it speaks well for ye both, and shows she's given over her cantrips; and I'm sorry I fashed ye about your grandame, but there's nothing to be ashamed of, nothing at all. She was a good clean religious body, and I'm not one to look down on ye because ye are not what we are, though I'm free to own when they married Joan to ye we quarrelled with Archie, as far as anybody ever can quarrel with him, the fair sweet-spoken soul——'

Mr. Challoner, conscious of a sudden silence that had fallen on the twenty well-bred people scattered about, behind and around him, in which

the voice of his torturer fell horribly loud and distinct, wished that the mosaic floor would open as the gulf for Curtius.

'Joan's a fine-featured woman,' pursued Miss Moira, rising in all her plaids, 'but she's a Perth-Douglas, and she's got a wild eye. You mind my word when I'm gone. Look after her well with the Papist. And now, gude day, and many thanks to ye, Leddy Joan. I'm mighty glad to see ye've taken to such a sober thing as tillin' land and fattin' fowls, and I hope ye'll keep steady at it; and, yes, to be sure, I'll remember ye to my niece Forfar, though she's never seen ye, and I doubt if she's ever heard o' ye, and ye're scarce cousin to her, as ye're sayin'—it's very far away, indeed; one of your forebears in the last century married the then duke's seventh daughter, and they were Archie's father's great grandfather's cousins-german—still it counts, oh yes, it counts, and I'll give her your love for certain; and so I'll bid ye fareweel, and many thanks to ye, and we'll return it in kind whenever ye come north again. And I suppose ye don't travel with the Papist, but ye

can explain to him that we'd be glad to see him in Caithness, for it might be the saving of his soul if he came in reach of the true doctrine, and our minister would weary the Lord for him night and day, for he is a personable man and a courteous, and it is sad to think he will burn in the life everlasting.'

'Mille remercîments, Mesdames, et à revoir,' murmured the Prince Ioris, vaguely gathering that they were wishing him well, and offering them a bouquet of autumnal heliotrope and Louise de Savoie roses.

The Miss Moiras accepted the flowers, and drove away in state, pugs, plaids, ear-trumpets, courier, and all, on their return journey towards Rome.

'There is a deal in manner, sister,' said the elder Miss Moira, as she smelt the heliotrope.

'There is, sister. What were ye meaning?'

'That the Papist has a manner, and that the carpet man hasn't,' replied the elder Miss Moira. 'Let us hope that Leddy Joan canna see the difference, and has steadied down. But I have my doubts, sister.'

'And ye do well to have your doubts, sister. Ye were ever very sharp o' sight.'

The elder Miss Moira sniffed with scorn the bland air of the Roman twilight.

'It needs but half an eye, Elizabeth, to see that a Perth-Douglas woman loves her cantrips, and that the Papist is a deal bonnier to look at than the person that sold carpets. But she was very civil, and her gude man seems a well-meaning douce body, and she's steadied down; I shall say so everywhere; she's steadied down, and we must do all we can for her, sister. She is Archie's daughter.'

'She is Archie's daughter, sister.'

The elder Miss Moira would have changed her amicable intentions if she could have seen her hostess dancing a war-dance in the loggia, and snapping her fingers after the vanishing carriage.

'The hateful old cats!' cried the Lady Joan, 'I thought they'd never go! Wretched old women! Why didn't you stop their tongues, Robert? And what an ass *you* were, Io, receiving them like that. Of course they couldn't help

finding out the house was yours, and old idiots like those will never understand ——'

'They were good harmless people,' said the Prince Ioris, in his own tongue, a little timidly, standing under the arch of his loggia, and watching the sunset.

'Stuff! They are the most horrid old harridans in existence. But every old hag seems good to you. I do believe you see good in everybody! The idea, too, of wasting those roses on 'em! Roses sell for half a franc apiece now. And giving them yourself, too! They've been boring Mr. Challoner to death about what you are here, and whose the house is. But you're always doing something ridiculous. Only remember this. Give your head away with the roses next time, if you like, only all I insist is—don't compromise *me*!'

The Prince Ioris was silent. He leaned against a column of the loggia, and watched the sun go down behind the hills.

Lady Joan Challoner and her husband went within to the twenty well-bred people, and busied themselves pleasantly with them, and gave parting

smiles and Muscat grapes to some, and retained a few to dinner.

Meanwhile, the Miss Moiras rolled onward to Rome through the descending mists of evening, and nodding amidst their cushions, fell asleep, until roused by the cessation of all movement, and a voice they knew, they were startled to find that the carriage was entering the gates of Rome. A gentleman, old, bent, feeble, smiled and nodded, came up and shook hands, as the horses were stopped for a moment by the pressure of traffic. This gentleman was Lord George Scrope-Stair, an old acquaintance and a privileged person.

'You have been to see Pope Joan?' he said, with a little laugh. 'Did you like Fiordelisa?' and he nodded and laughed again. 'Ah! yes, we always call her Pope Joan; I do, at least, when my daughters don't hear me; Pope Joan keeps the keys of both heaven and earth and ousts Peter out of his own palace, you know! Only my little joke; don't tell the girls. Good night.'

And the old man, who had been once a dandy and a beau in days when George the Fourth was

King, walked onward in the twilight, chuckling feebly.

'Pope Joan!' echoed Miss Moira of Moira, as their carriage rolled over the stones. 'Sister, I wish we had not gone to the place!'

'So do I, sister,' said the echo.

They went peacefully home to their hotel and dined, with misgivings weighing on their souls; and then being tired slept again until the elder Miss Moira awoke from a blissful doze with a start.

'I wonder whose the place really is, sister?' she mumbled as she yawned.

'I wonder, sister,' said the echo.

CHAPTER II.

It was sunset on the Pincio on the first day of December. Beyond St. Peter's there was that sky of purple and of gold which always seems so much more marvellous here than it does anywhere else; that roseleaf warmth and soft transparency of flame-like colour which those who have looked on it never will forget so long as their lives shall last on earth.

Below, loud, cracked, discordant bells were chiming one against another; near at hand a military band was playing very fast and very much out of tune, waltzes of Strauss's; a monk, the worse for wine, was screaming homilies from a bench, and guards were vainly striving to arrest

him amidst the laughter of the crowd; but nothing spoiled the grandeur of the scene, or could destroy the sublime calmness of the declining day, as the broken green lines of the hills grew black against the burning scarlet of the clouds, and the vast expanse of roofs and spires, cupolas and towers, obelisks and gardens, ruins and palaces, colossal temples and desolate marshes, that is all called Rome, stretched away wide and vague and solemn as a desert; with a sun, nearly as red and rayless as the desert's, hanging above the cross on the great dome.

It was four o'clock; and there was the customary crowd of fashionable idlers, fretting horses, emblazoned carriages, sauntering dandies, handsome artists, tired invalids, black-robed priests and scarlet-clad janitors, cuirassed soldiers and curly-headed children, violet-gowned seminarists and purple-gowned scholars, and, first and foremost, fashionable ladies chattering at the top of their voices about the first fox-hunt of the year, the first court ball, the new arrivals, and the Pope's state of health.

The sun was going down in majesty behind

the round domes raised to lay the restless soul of Nero; but up here on the hill nobody scarcely looked at it, but idling and laughing and talking people turned their backs to the west, to hear the music better, and kept looking instead at one woman as she passed, and murmured to each other in a little flutter: 'Dear me! There is Etoile, and the Coronis!' and then reassured each other, and said, 'Yes, indeed—oh yes, really—that is Etoile with the Coronis!' in a certain tone of disappointment because she was only like any other well-dressed woman after all, and humanity considers that when genius comes forth in the flesh the touch of the coal from the altar should have left some visible stigmata on the lips it has burned, as, of course anybody knows, it invariably leaves some smirch upon the character.

Humanity feels that genius ought to wear a livery, as Jews and loose women wore yellow in the old golden days of distinction.

'They don't even paint!' said one lady, and felt herself aggrieved.

Nevertheless the lady and all the rest of the crowd continued to look.

Dorotea Coronis, they had all of them seen many scores of times through their opera-glasses at Covent Garden, the Grand Opera, and the theatre at Baden; but Etoile they had hardly any of them ever seen, and they stared hard with all the admirable impudence of a well-born mob.

'They don't seem to see us!' said the aggrieved lady who had wondered they did not paint.

'Look deuced proud,' muttered an Englishman who had lifted his hat eagerly, and put it on sulkily, being unnoticed.

The carriage swept by again, and both the women in it looked at the sunset, and not at the crowd. The crowd began to feel neglected, and to grow ill-natured. Sovereigns took the trouble to bow: why could not these two whose only royalty was that of art?

'Who is Etoile?' said the crowd.

'An enigma without an Œdipus,' said one of its items, who thought himself a wit.

'There is no enigma at all, except in your imaginations,' said another item, who was old and grave, which was a foolish remark, no doubt, because an enigma that is purely imaginary must

be of necessity the most puzzling of all, since it follows as a matter of course that nobody ever can solve it.

The carriage paused, and its occupants bought Parma violets. The crowd was disposed to think there must be some motive for the action, as it eyed dubiously the boarhound trotting behind the carriage, and would fain have believed that his tongue hanging out meant a mystery, and that he broke a commandment in wagging his tail.

It is one of the privileges of celebrity that the person celebrated can never wash his hands or open an umbrella without being accredited with some occult reason for his proceedings.

'Is it really Etoile?' said the crowd. Generally speaking people were disposed to believe that she was not herself, but somebody else.

She did not see them. She had a sad habit of not seeing those who surrounded her. When, recalled to a sense of her negligence, she begged the pardon of others for having overlooked them, she was not readily forgiven. People would rather be insulted than be unperceived.

Her equipage, with its long-tailed Roman horses, went the round of the Pincio, past the cactus and aloes, the water clock and the kiosques for toys, the music-stands and the garden chairs and the various other embellishments placed here, where Augustus mused, and Cæsar and Pompeius supped.

She gazed at the lovely light, rosy as blown pomegranate leaves, with little puffs of golden cloud upon it, light as a cherub's curls.

'How matchless it is!' she said, with a sigh.

'It is Rome,' said Dorotea Coronis.

And for them both, the crowd ceased to exist. They only saw the slow-descending sun.

To be wise in this world one should always be blind to the sunset, but never to the people that bow. The sun, neglected, will not freckle us any more than if we had penned him a thousand sonnets as the lord of light. A man or a woman, slighted, will burn us brown all over with blistering spots of censure indelible as stains of iodine, and deep as wounds of vitriol.

'Is it really Etoile?' said the crowd eagerly, and scarcely looked at the brilliant Gitana-like

loveliness of her companion, the great Coronis, because it was familiar, but turned and stared with all the stony-hearted inquisitiveness of Society at the little they could see of the one whom they called Etoile, which was indeed only a heap of silver-fox furs, a pile of violets, a knot of old Flemish lace, and dreaming serious eyes that watched the sunset.

She herself scarcely saw that any crowd was there. This kind of oblivion was usually her deadliest sin, and she was unconscious that she sinned, which made it very much worse. People blew their bubbles, or threw their stones about her, and she never heeded either, though indeed, the stones came so thickly sometimes that she ought in common gratitude to have been flattered: calumny is the homage of our contemporaries, as some South Sea Islanders spit on those they honour.

Popularity has been defined as the privilege of being cheered by the kind of people you would never allow to bow to you.

Fame may be said to be the privilege of being slandered at once by the people who

do bow to you, as well as by the people who do not.

'Who is she?' said the crowd on the Pincio

Nobody there knew at all. So everybody averred they knew for certain. Nobody's story agreed with anybody else's, but that did not matter at all. The world, like Joseph's father, gives the favourite a coat of many colours which the brethren rend.

'She says herself—' hinted the old grave idler, member of many clubs, but nobody wanted to hear what she said herself. *Pas si bête!* Of course she told a story well and laid on the right colours; nobody had talents like hers for nothing.

The old idler got no listeners, and went away pensively to lean on the parapet. He was so far in the minority as to believe what she said herself; which was quite simple and comparatively uneventful, and, therefore, evidently improbable. If she had said she had new lovers every night, and killed them in a back garden every morning, like the Jewess of the French Regency, people might have believed: there would have been

nothing staggeringly and audaciously impossible about that.

The crowd on the Pincio, when the whisper of her name had first run through it, had been alive with admiration and cordiality; but the crowd felt that it had had cold water thrown on its enthusiasm, and so began to hiss, as fire under cold water always does.

'Very clever, indeed,' said the crowd. 'Oh, yes, no doubt. Oh, wonderful, quite wonderful, every one knew that; but who was she? Ah! nobody could tell. Oh yes, indeed, it was quite well known. She was a beggar's brat found on a doorstep; she was a cardinal's daughter; she was a princess's *petite faute*; she was a Rothschild's mistress; she was a Cabinet Minister's craze; she was poor De Morny's daughter; she had been a slave in Circassia; she had been a serf in White Russia; she had been found frozen, with a tambourine in her hand, outside the gates at Vincennes; her father was at the galleys, her mother kept an inn. No, they were both Imperial spies and very rich; no, they were both dead; no, nobody ever said that,

they said this. The poor Emperor knew, beyond doubt; and the secret had died with him. She was quite out of society, she was in the highest society; she was not received anywhere, she was received everywhere. Oh, that was not true, but this was. Well, the less said the better.'

When the world has decided that the less said the better, it always proceeds directly to say everything in the uttermost abundance that it can possibly think of, and it did so on the Pincio this day at sunset, and asked a variety of questions as well.

'Why had she come?'

'Was she going to remain?'

'Would she go out at all?'

'Would she receive?'

'Would she be received?'

'Would she go the legations?'

'Were those Russian furs?'

'Was that dress Worth's?'

'Why did she stop her horses there, with her back to everybody, where she couldn't hear a note of the music?'

So they chattered in much excitement, gazing

at her through their eyeglasses, or from under their parasols.

Nobody there happened to know anything, except that she had come to Rome from Paris, by Nice and Genoa, the previous night; but there was a general feeling that there was probably something wrong.

Why did she turn the back of her carriage to them and buy Parma violets?

In a little while, as the sun grew into a solemn red ball behind the purple dome, and the shadows became longer, the throng began to go down the great winding stairways towards the square below, where the waters fell from the marble mouths, and the grave sphinxes were couched beneath the drooping boughs.

A lady, wrapped in sealskin, with a sealskin hat set well over her brows, began to move also with the two persons who formed her escort. The trio was composed of Lady Joan Challoner, and her husband and the Prince Ioris.

'Is that Etoile?' said the Lady Joan eagerly, as the carriage dashed past them, and she caught the name spoken by some bystanders.

'Is that reely Etoile, now? Do tell,' said a fashionable American of her acquaintance joining her, by name Mrs. Henry V. Clams.

'They say so. I've never seen her myself,' answered Lady Joan. 'Io, and I, and Mr. Challoner have just been to call on her, but she was out. She has brought me letters.'

'Reely, now! How interestin'!' said the fashionable American. 'Well, it's a very elegant turn-out, now, aren't it? My word!——'

'You can get anything you like to pay for in Rome,' said the Lady Joan with much contempt—she herself was on foot. 'I must be civil to her. Voightel begs me to be so, and my father too; I must have her to dinner. Will you come, Mrs. Clams?'

'Oh, thanks, now; that's reel kind!' said Mrs. Henry V. Clams. 'I'm dyin' to see her, dyin', and I've got a bet in N'York about the way she wears her hair. But they do say she's so rude, you know; Cyrus C. Butterfield—as works the Saratoga press, you know—wrote to ask her to send him every particular of her life from her baptism upwards, and would you believe it?—her

secretary—a female, I believe—sent him back his own letter! There!'

The Lady Joan laughed shortly.

'I should say Cyrus C. Butterfield's inquiries would be particularly inconvenient to *her!* I wonder why on earth she has come to Rome!'

'Is there anything strange in coming to Rome?' said the Prince Ioris in his soft Roman tongue.

'No, of course no; what silly things you say! Only, of course she's got some motive. She's with Coronis too.'

'The loveliest woman in Europe,' said Mr. Challoner with solemnity and unction.

'Wretched creature,' said the Lady Joan.

'My word, now, what *she's* up to?' inquired Mrs. Henry V. Clams with lively interest. 'Why, she's Duchesse Santorin, aren't she?'

'And the Duke is going to divorce her.'

'My! You don't say so!'

'Santorin is very thankless: she has paid his debts again and again,' murmured the Prince Ioris.

'Oh, everybody that sings is an angel to

you, Io!' said Lady Joan, with some irritation.

'If she's paid his debts, he's paid by the nose! Everybody knows what these professional women always are. I daresay Etoile herself is no better.'

'My dear love,' said Mr. Challoner with serious reproof, 'surely you forget. Would your father ever——'

'My father's an ass where a petticoat's concerned, and he'd swear it had all the virtues inside it if it had only taken his fancy. He makes a great fuss about her; Voightel, too, who believes in nobody, believes in her. It's so queer! I suppose she's only sharper than most people.'

'I never heard a word——' began the Prince Ioris.

'Stuff,' said the Lady Joan, 'there are heaps of stories—hideous stories. And there's no smoke without fire, that's certain. What day shall we ask her to dinner?'

'Well, now, I did read years ago, in our country, that she lived with a stoker as she'd taken a fancy to in the Lyons cars once,' said

Mrs. Henry V. Clams reflectively, searching into recesses of her memory.

Mr. Challoner and the Prince Ioris laughed outright.

'I never heard of the stoker, but I daresay there are things quite as fishy,' said the Lady Joan. 'What night shall we fix? Will the sixth suit you, Mrs. Clams?'

They sauntered on by the stone balustrades with the scattered groups, who were all making for the Corso, or walking under the Tempietto, Babuino-way, and who were all more or less talking of Etoile and of Dorotea Coronis.

The groups seldom said anything that was amiable of either, still less seldom anything that was true. But to be thus spoken of at all constitutes what the world calls Fame, and ever since the days of Horace the world has wondered that the objects of it are not more grateful for the distinction of detraction.

'Why do you spit?' says the glow-worm.

'Why do you shine?' says the frog.

CHAPTER III.

At the entrance of the Corso, Mr. Challoner recollected an appointment with a friend; his wife and the Prince Ioris strolled on down the Corso together.

It was the hour when the street was at its fullest and prettiest; the irregular casements were half-lighted, half-dark; the painted and gilded signs swung in the shadows; lamps hung above balconies draped with red; in a church doorway white priests were chanting with torches flickering; at the corners stood great baskets of violets and camellias, rose and white; knots of *pifferari* droned the wild, sad monotones of the music of the hills; at a quick march a file of

bersaglieri, with their plumes streaming, were coming up the narrow way as up a mountain pass; horses were trampling, drums were beating loud.

'I wonder how *you* will like Etoile, Io; you always do like queer people!' said the Lady Joan, as they moved down into that picturesque chaos and luminous mingling of the night and day.

Her companion answered with gallant grace, 'Whatever she is, she will be only for me—*la terza incommoda!*'

The Lady Joan laughed, well pleased, as she pushed her way through the lively and laughing crowds down to the Palazzo di Venezia. In an angle near the Ripresa dei Barberi, where two streets crossed one another in that populous and convenient locality, there was a small house squeezed between two grim palaces, and known as the Casa Challoner to the society and the tradespeople of Rome.

The Lady Joan climbed the stone stairs of the Casa Challoner with agility, and her companion followed with the accustomed matter-of-course air of a man who returns home.

The house was dusky, there was only one lamp lighted in the anteroom, but she pushed her way safely into a little chamber heavy with the smell of Turkish tobacco, and hung with Turkish stuffs, and fitted with Turkish couches.

On one of the divans the Prince Ioris cast himself a little wearily.

The Lady Joan lit a cigarette, stuck it between her teeth, cast aside her sealskins, and began to look over a pile of letters.

'I wish she hadn't come, bother her,' she muttered, 'Here's pages more eulogy from that old Tartar, Voightel. She seems to be perfection. I hate perfect people.'

The Prince Ioris stretched himself out, and closed his eyes; his friend continued her examination of her correspondence. There was ten minutes' silence, only broken by the ticking of a Flemish chime-clock.

At the end of ten minutes Lady Joan looked up impatiently.

'Don't lie there, Io, doing nothing; tell me what we've got for next week, that I may settle this dinner.'

He sighed, raised himself, and took out a set of tablets from his pocket.

'You have the English bishop and bishopess to-morrow.'

'"Bishopess!" Well, go on.'

'The Echéance soirée on the 3rd.'

'Can't miss that. Well?'

'You take more English to the Opera on the 4th.'

'*Après?*'

'Fifth, masked ball at the Greek Legation?'

'Sixth, Saturday?'

'Two teas—names English that I cannot pronounce.'

'We'll throw over the teas. Sixth will do. Get some cards, and fill 'em up.'

He obeyed, and went to a little writing-table.

'She's a sensational creature to have,' continued his friend; 'it's best to have her seen here first, before anybody else takes the cream off it. Whom shall we ask? Clever people they must be, and people that go in for that sort of thing. Ask Lady Cardiff; she won't mind if Etoile does startle the proprieties.'

He filled in the card obediently; and she dictated some dozen other names to him, leaning over his shoulder as he wrote.

'Now fill in Etoile's,' she said. 'I'll send a little note with it, too, to be civil. That old beast Voightel and papa make such a fuss——'

'I cannot put—Etoile on the card?'

'Of course not. You must put Comtesse d'Avesnes. Did ever you hear such rubbish! And papa and Voightel believe in her, title and all.'

'Why should they not?' said the writer, as he slid the cards into their envelopes.

The Lady Joan thrust her tongue in her cheek, and jumped a step of the hornpipe.

'As much countess as the cat! Now do draw that triptych that old Norwich wants so—make haste. We dine at seven, you know, because of the theatre. Send Anselmo with the notes to-morrow morning. Etoile's you might leave to-night. She's on your way home. I'll write her note now.'

She crossed over to her bureau, and wrote a pretty epistle, which ended:

'Pray kindly waive ceremony, and come to us on Saturday; my dear father and so many of our common friends have spoken so much of you that I cannot even think of you as a stranger, and my husband will be as glad as I to have the honour of receiving Etoile in our Roman home.'

Then she wrote another, which began:

'Dearest Voightel,—The hint of a wish of yours is a delight and a command to me; you know how I love and honour all genius, &c. &c.'

Then she scampered through half-a-dozen more letters, with the pen of a ready writer; jumped up and crossed over to where her friend sat, sketching by the light of a reading-lamp, and ran her fingers through his soft dark hair.

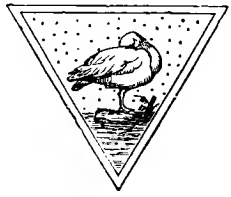
'How slow you are, Io! You've only drawn one wing yet, and I've written fifteen letters.'

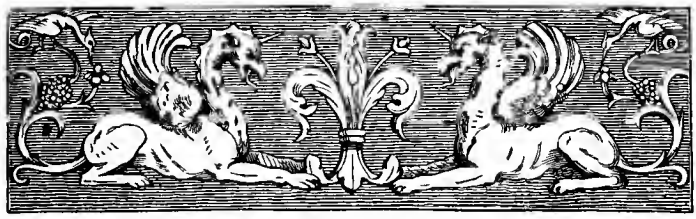
That night the Prince Ioris, after escorting the Lady Joan to and from the broad fun of the Valle Theatre, walked through the white Roman moonlight, to his own little ancient palace in the street of the Ripetta, and pausing, as he went, at the Hôtel de Russie, left the Lady Joan's note there for the Comtesse d'Avesnes.

'Etoile; it is a pretty name,' he thought to himself; 'whose star is she beside her own? A great artist, all the world knows; what else may she be, I wonder?'

Now, to wonder about any woman was a liberty and a luxury forbidden to him.

The key of his very thoughts hung to the girdle of the Lady Joan as she moved, and lay under the pillow of the Lady Joan as she slept—or she believed it did, which satisfied her quite as well





CHAPTER IV.

WHO was Etoile ?

The world in general said it as often as the crowd on the Pincio.

They never attended to what she said herself. Nobody wants facts. Facts are hardly more amusing than mathematics. Unless, indeed, they are the kind of facts that you can only just whisper under your breath. And of this kind of facts—the only kind that can in any way be diverting to others—the life of the great Belgian artist remained conspicuously, absurdly, inconsistently, and inconsiderately barren.

The world supplied the deficiency.

The world supplies you with history as our

great tailor supplies us with dresses: he surveys our face and figure and selects for us what is appropriate. The world cuts out its gossip on the same judicious lines—whether you like what is given you is of no moment either to Worth or the world: you have got to wear it.

Be thankful that you are Somebody. Neither Worth nor the world would trouble themselves to fit you if you were not.

In the morning Society that had been on the Pincio read in its papers that Etoile was in Rome on account of her health. Physicians had advised perfect repose and a warmer winter than Paris or Brussels can offer. Society read the paragraph, and putting down the papers wondered what the paragraph was meant to cover. Something, of course. Heaps of things, probably. Health indeed! What rubbish! Wasn't it a sculptor? . . . . No; money! . . . . Ah, money? . . . . Oh, indeed, much worse than *that*! . . . . Exile was *ordered*, quite *ordered* from the Elysée. You understand? Everybody whispered, nodded, seemed to understand, because nobody did under-

stand in the least; and nobody, of course, could endure to look so ignorant.

When a name is on the public mouth the public nostril likes to smell a foulness in it. It likes to think that Byron committed incest; that Milton was a brute; that Raffaelle's vices killed him; that Pascal was mad; that Lamartine lived and died a pauper, that Scipio took the treasury moneys; that Thucydides and Phidias stole; that Heloise and Hypatia were but loose women after all—so the gamut runs over twice a thousand years; and Rousseau is at heart the favourite of the world because he was such a beast, with all his talent.

When the world is driven to tears and prayers by Schiller it hugs itself to remember that he could not write a line without the smell of rotten apples near, and that when he died there was not enough money in his desk to pay his burial. They make him smaller, closer, less divine: the apples and the pauper's coffin.

Etoile kept no rotten apples by her, and the world sniffed in vain.

Had she worn men's clothes, travelled with

a married duke, and had a caprice for a drunken painter, no doubt the world would have better understood her genius. As it was it felt exasperated, and thought her ostentatious.

After all, the innocence of a woman is no amusement whatever to anybody. It only gives nothing to be said about her. In any case, whenever the woman is celebrated, the world will not put up with nothing. It cuts out the garment of her history to its own fancy. It is like the great tailor: it knows better than she does what she ought to wear.

Etoile rose and strolled through the courts and galleries of the Vatican, unconscious, or indifferent, of the babble that went on concerning her.

Society saw her servant and the big dog, Tsar, sitting outside with the Swiss Guard. It was almost inclined to think there must be something wrong with a Cardinal. What a nasty savage-looking creature that dog was!

At noon she went back to her hotel, found a few cards awaiting her, and at two o'clock was seen to be driving with the Princess Vera von Regonwalde, an ambassadress and a wit.

Princess von Regonwalde, or Princess Vera, as her friends called her by her pretty girlish title, was an Austrian by birth, and the wife of a Minister of another great Power, not Austrian. She was one of the loveliest women that ever brightened a court; she had a face like the Cenci, a walk like a young Diana's, a smile like a child's, a grace like a flower's, eyes like a fawn's, fancies like a poet's, and a form that Titian would have given to Venus. She had beautiful children, that clung round her in Correggio-like groups; and she always looked like a picture, whether shining in velvet and cloth of gold in a throne-room, or straying in a linen dress through starlit myrtles on Italian hills. Princess Vera was a great social power; and when Society saw Etoile in her carriage it began to think that probably after all the paragraph was quite true; it began to recollect that it had always heard that this great artist's lungs were not very strong. And what a beautiful dog was the boarhound! Dear fellow, what was his name?

Mrs. Henry V. Clams, on the contrary, as she saw the Regonwalde carriage sweep by, said

that it was right-down preposterous, and she didn't care who heard her.

Mrs. Henry V. Clams had passed the years of her youth in a Far West sawmill, in sewing-bees, washing-bees, blackberrying, and chapel-going, in the middle of a clearing, a good five hundred miles from any township; and she had, now that youth was fled from her, bloomed into an *élégante* in Europe, thanks to marvellous dishes, unlimited open house, politic lovers, and her husband's dollars, which were many.

Still, as an *élégante*, Mrs. Henry V. Clams never felt quite sure of her footing, and the night before, on the Pincio, at the sight of Etoile in dusky olive-hued velvet, entirely unornamented, she had had an uneasy conviction that she herself had too many buttons, too many colours, too many fringes, and had a bonnet too much like a firework, and that her Paris deity had been faithless to her and had arrayed her in raiment only fit for the 'half-world,' and the feeling rankled in her and made her say, 'Preposterous!' snappishly, though she was a good-natured woman in the main.

Mrs. Henry V. Clams' countrywomen are received at all the Courts of Europe with no better qualification, very often, than that nobody *does* know where they come from; and, did any ill-judged inquisitor seek to know, his investigations would very often lead him into many unsavoury dens of the Bowery and drinking-shops of 'Frisco,' into the shanty of many a ticket-of-leave man and the pawnshop of many a German Jew.

But it is a question that Mrs. Henry V. Clams and her countrywomen are very fond of asking; and indeed, *àpropos* of their own countrywomen, they will always tell you with the utmost frankness that Mrs. Ulysses B. Washington once sold hot potatoes, and Mrs. Heloise W. Dobbs shot her first husband in St. Louis, and Miss Anastasia B. Spyrle, betrothed to Prince Volterra, danced in tights throughout the States; or any other biographical trifle of the sort, with an impartiality scorning national bias.

'Nobody can't say where she came from,' said Mrs. Henry V. Clams, drawing herself out a glass of Curaçoa from a little barrel of

Baccarât glass in her own drawing-room. It was her day to receive.

'Nobody can't say where she came from,' reiterated Mrs. Henry V. Clams with a kind of triumph.

'Who wants to know where artists come from? *I* don't,' said Lady Joan Challoner, with a fine sentiment worthy of a great patron of the arts, which she was.

'When they stick to being artists, of course not,' said Mrs. Henry V. Clams. 'You don't see 'em then, and have no call to speak to 'em; but to think as Princess Vera, who, I'm sure, looks as if angels and empresses weren't good enough to black her shoes——'

'Princess Vera's art-mad,' said the Lady Joan. 'I love art myself, as you know, but still there are bounds to everything. Well, anyhow *I* must know her, so I'm glad Princess Vera will keep me in countenance. Io, we ought to be going. What are you looking at there? Oh, a photograph of Etoile.'

The Prince Ioris laid aside an album marked *Célébrités*, with a backward glance at the page

he had opened it at, where he saw a mere profile like a white cameo on a dark ground, and the letters 'Etoile' underneath it.

'Can one buy those portraits, madame?' he asked of his hostess as he hastened to follow the Lady Joan.

'Why, my! yes. That one's five francs. I think it's one of Goupil's,' said Mrs. Henry V. Clams. 'But it isn't much to look at; that one of Judic's, now, or Croisette's——'

But it was not Judic or Croisette that was in his fancy.

'Come along; take Spit,' said the Lady Joan sharply, and threw a small blue Skye dog into his arms as they descended the broad Aubusson-covered staircase of the American's magnificent abode.

'That woman upstairs was quite right: it *is* preposterous,' she continued. 'But I thought I wouldn't say so, as we must know her now. Where are my furs? Take care.'

The Prince Ioris, when in the streets, took advantage of a moment when the Lady Joan was engrossed in a shop in the Condotti cheapening

a piece of china to go across to Sulcipi's and order a photograph from Goupil's to be got for him.

The shopman answered with alacrity that he had one already. 'In fact, we have several, Excellence. She is here, you know, and that always creates a demand,' he said, dropping his voice.

Ioris bought the portrait, and slipped it inside his sable-lined coat.

'Where have you been, Io? I missed you a moment ago,' said the Lady Joan angrily, having failed to cheapen the china, and feeling cross accordingly.

'I went to look if it rained. I was afraid you would get wet,' he answered simply, and restored the serenity to her brows by buying the bowl for her.

It was a really charming piece of old Nankin.

'Etoile!' He said the word again to himself as he left his friend in her anteroom, happy with her bowl, and went to his own house to dress for dinner. The name had a fascination for him. He looked at the photograph by the light of the

lamps as he walked, and when he reached his own house put it away in a secret drawer. He had here and there a secret drawer of which the Lady Joan did not possess the secret.

The subject of his thoughts, and of the portrait, had been called Etoile as long as she could remember; the peasant folks calling her so because in her childhood she ran so fast, and her long fair hair streamed after her so far, that she looked like a shooting star as she flew by them in the summer nights in green Ardennes.

To the world in general the name seemed strange, suspicious, uncomfortable, indicative of that string of asterisks on a page which replaces what is too shocking to be printed. But to her it had all the old familiar charm of a sound that bears all childhood in it.

The first thing that she could remember was a sunny village in the woods on the banks of the bright Meuse water, in the heart of that sweet green country of Jaques and Rosalind which, for some things, has no equal upon earth.

Few places on the earth are lovelier than the province through which the bright Meuse wan-

ders, and the first memories of Etoile were of its glancing waters, its wooded hills, its rich grass-meadows, its noble forest trees, its gabled houses, grey and black with time, its broad yellow roads, leading westward to France and eastward to the Rhine. There are a breadth, a graciousness, a fresh and fragrant verdure in all this country not to be surpassed in charm; it is unworn and unspoilt; and although under its leafy woods the wheel of the gambler turns, and by its limpid springs the tired hypochondriac drinks, still there is much of it that neither gambler nor hypochondriac ever sees, and that is solitary as Suabian or Pennine Alp, and radiant with a brightness all its own.

The beautiful rapid river, foaming by mill and weir; and the hayfields, with their grand elms and walnuts; and the high hills where the pines grew, and the one little sunny paved street, with the village fountain at the end, where the women gossiped and the big-belled horses drank—these were the first things on which the eyes of Etoile had opened, and made the first pictures that her mind remembered. A brown-frocked monk, a

grey-frocked nun, a cowherd with his cattle, a wagon with its team, a group of women with their burden of linen going to the washing-places in the river—these were all that passed up and down the hilly road between the double row of tall bird-filled aspens; the little place was sunny, sleepy, very still, but it was lovely, bosomed deep in fragrant woods, and watered by the Meuse.

And then what a world of wonders lay around! — the primroses, the blue jays, the leaping trout, the passing boats, the foxes that stole out almost familiarly, the squirrel swinging in the nut thickets of the hills, the charcoal-burners coming down rough and black to tell tales of the bears and wolves high up above, the great Flemish cart-horses walking solemnly in state caparison outward on the highroads to France or Prussia, the red lurid glow far away in the evening sky, which told where the iron-blasters of stern, fierce Liége were at work—these were wonders enough for a thousand years, or at least for a young child to think them so.

Etoile thought so, and her childhood went by

like a fairy tale told by a soft voice on a summer day.

The house she lived in was very old, and had those charming conceits, those rich shadows, that depth of shade, that play of light, that variety, and that character which seem given to a dwelling-place in ages when men asked nothing better of their God than to live where their fathers had lived, and leave the old rooftree to their children's children.

The thing built yesterday, is a caravanserai: I lodge in it to-day, and you to-morrow; in an old house only can be made a home, where the blessings of the dead have rested and the memories of perfect faiths and lofty passions still abide.

This house stood in a green old shady garden, and at the end of the garden the trees hung over the beautiful river. Etoile used to think that in just such a garden must have passed the long slumbers of the Sleeping Beauty. All happy childhood is like an April morning, but hers was beyond most children's happy by reason of its simplicity, its unclouded peace, and the fair, gay,

shapeless dreams that were with it always like light golden clouds about the sun.

There were sadness and mystery near, but neither were allowed to touch her. She only knew peace and joy. If she had been told that she had dropped from the stars on a midsummer night she would have believed it quite easily: no healthy child's life will ever wonder whence it comes or whither it drifts. It is enough for it that it *is*.

This is the one felicity that the innocence of infancy and the trance of passion share in common. The immediate moment is the heaven alike of the child and of the lover.

She was very happy always in this, her green birth-country, by the river-side.

But she was never happier than when she went out of the sweet summer sunshine, from the murmur of the street fountain, and from the smell of the blossoming orchards into the quiet dusky den that was her study, and bent her curls over the ponderous tomes and the intricate exercises with which her tutors delighted in trying her patience and her powers.

Out of doors she was the merest child, happy in all a child's pleasure of new-born days and new-found berries, and new-made cakes, of the old swing in the sycamore, and the first swallow, that showed summer, and the promise of a long day in the woods to bring home violets, or any other of the many simple things which made her childhood beautiful.

She knew the whereabouts of every rare wild flower; she knew every bird that haunted the woods or the streams; she was friends with all the peasant folk, and would find their stray sheep for them and tame the dogs they were afraid of; she loved the wind and the wild weather as she loved the heat that uncurled the carnation-buds, and the still moonshine when the nightingales sang in the orchards; she was not dismayed if evening fell as she ran alone down a lone hill-side, or if she bore down through the swift wild rain like a little white boat through a surging sea; she had the love of nature of a German and the unconsciousness that she loved it of a Greek.

'*Tu es folle*,' said her old teacher to her

because she laughed and cried for joy to see the first primrose break out of the bleak brown earth, and kneeled down and kissed the flower, and told it how glad the birds would be, and would not to have saved her life have taken it away from its shelter of green leaves. '*Tu es folle*,' said the old teacher—it is what the world always says to the poet.

In the forests on the Meuse river there lived an old man who did not tell her she was foolish. He was a German, who had been a noted artist in his day, until paralysis of his right arm by some accident had put an end to his career and his hopes of fame. He was sad and alone; was harsh of temper and taciturn; but he took a fancy to this child who was always out of doors trying to learn the secrets of the clouds' movements and the waters' hues, and he guided aright her passionate instincts towards the arts. By the time she was fifteen she had created things that the old master thought more marvellous than he would confess to her. She painted all the day in the open air, on the hills and by the torrents; she studied all the

evenings and half the night. She was perfectly happy.

There was another world, of course, where the hay-wagons went and the barges down the river; but she wanted no other.

Now and then there would come to the black-and-white house on the river a person for whom the ways of the house were changed, and who was always whispered of in words of awe by the village people. He would kiss her carelessly, bid her do a problem or write a poem, stay a few days, and go. She was told that he was her father—the Count Raoul d'Avesnes.

In the old fighting days the Counts d'Avesnes had been a fierce and mighty race, reigning in lofty regions of the wild Ardennes, Catholics always, and warriors rather than courtiers. Little by little, in strife and conspiracy, and internecine wars, they had lost their lands and greatness, until little save their traditions were left in modern times. This, their sole living representative, was a man of many ambitions, of no achievement. A political gamester, a political conspirator, his life was spent in the treacherous

seas of political intrigue, and he at the last perished in their whirlpool. Little was known of him—by his daughter almost nothing. He had broken his wife's heart and spent her money. His own death was mysterious, like his life. He passed away and made no sign.

There is so much mystery in this world, only people who lead humdrum lives will not believe it.

It is a great misfortune to be born to a romantic history. The humdrum always think that you are lying. In real truth romance is common in life, commoner, perhaps, than the commonplace. But the commonplace always looks more natural.

In nature there are millions of gorgeous hues to a scarcity of neutral tints; yet the pictures that are painted in sombre semi-tones and have no one positive colour in them are always pronounced the nearest to nature. When a painter sets his palette, he dares not approach the gold of the sunset and dawn or the flame of the pomegranate and poppy. Etoile's short story had this gold and red in it, and so no one believed in it

any more than they do in the life-likeness of Turner's Hesperides.

She, a happy and thoughtful child, lived in the little Ardennes village with her mother's mother, and her two old servants, and knew nothing of all this heritage of wonder and of woe. Occasionally the wonderful person who was called her father came and brought a wonderful breath of the outer air with him. That was all she knew.

One day his shadow passed for the last time up the sunny street between the aisles of aspen and was seen no more there ever after, and his letters ceased, and silence fell upon his fate; and in time they came to know that he was dead and she was the last that lived of the once famous race of the Counts d'Avesnes.

It scarcely seemed strange to her—she had always known so little.

He had been a black bead in the golden rosary of her happy childhood; she barely missed it when it dropped.

In after-years people would never believe that Etoile, beyond the fact of the patrician name she

bore, had known so little; they forgot how completely natural and matter-of-course the strangest circumstances seem to one who has been rocked in them, as it were, in a cradle from birth upward.

Her father had come and gone, come and gone, as comets do. He ceased to come; it did not seem strange.

She studied in the big books, and strayed about in the chesnut woods and orchards, and lived in her own fancies more than in anything around her. Vague desires would ofttimes touch her, as she used to stand on the brow of the reaped fields, and watch the sun go down, red and beautiful against the dusky masses of the far-off woods. But they were desires whose wings were still folded; like those of fledgling birds, that flutter a little way through the green leaves, and then are frightened at their dreams of flight.

For the rest, her grandmother and the old servants took all care of things bodily and temporal. Etoile was free to think and dream and study.

The treasures of scholarship are sweet to all

who open them. But they are perhaps sweetest of all to a girl that has been led both by habit and by nature to seek them.

The soul of a girl whilst passions sleep, desires are unknown, and self-consciousness lies unawakened, can lose itself in the impersonal as no male student can. The mightiness and beauty of past ages become wonderful and all-sufficient to it, as they can never do to a youth beset by the stinging fires of impending manhood. The very element of faith and of imagination, hereafter its weakness, becomes the strength of the girl-scholar. The very abandonment of self, which later on will fling her to Sappho's death, or mure her in the cell of Heloise, will make her find a cloudless and all-absorbing happiness in the meditations of great minds, in the myths of heroic ages, in the delicate intricacies of language, and in the immeasureable majesties of thought. The evil inseparable from all knowledge will pass by her unfelt; the greatness only attainable by knowledge will lend her perfect and abiding joys.

Whilst they were only scholars be sure that

Sappho and Heloise were calmer and more glad than any other women; it was when they looked up from the written page to the human face that their woes surpassed all others'—because beyond all others' was their loss.

A year after the tidings of the Comte d'Avesnes' death had come to the Ardennes, her grandmother, reflecting that at her death the child would be solitary, with a slender patrimony and a name whose past nobility was of no present use, resolved to sacrifice her own peace and move to a great city.

They went to Paris, leaving the green Meuse waters and those bright woodland villages that lie out of the beaten track and are so still and fresh and charming. Etoile sobbed bitterly: yet she was full of ecstatic wonder and hope. She forgot that thousands have had such hope before her, and had only perished miserably in the vast press of life. If youth did not thus forget, maturity would have no fame to record.

They made their home in a nook of old Paris within sight of the trees of the Luxembourg. A tumult of great ideas and vague

ambitions was in the mind of the child who had studied more than many men, and had the poetry of many nations all alive within her.

In the city of pleasure Etoile uninterruptedly pursued both art and study. Friends they had but few; those few were of the proud impoverished families of a nobility that had nothing left except its traditions of honour; and such as these thought the pursuit of art a degradation.

One day Etoile, however, made a friend of her own. Chances brought her across the path of an old man whose name was very glorious to her: a great master whose genius had been nurtured amidst the mighty storms of the First Empire. The old man looked long in silence at her, the harsh lines of his face softening and changing; then he turned to her and uncovered his white head.

'My sun has long set,' he said; 'I rejoice to see yours rise.'

The word of David Istrion was still a law in Paris and all the worlds of art. He kept her secret and sent her first picture to the Salon himself.

'One of my pupils' was all he would say when questioned as to the painter.

The picture was only the study of a gleaner returning by sunset over naked fields; but it had an instant and unquestioned success. It was followed by greater and stronger works signed 'Etoile.'

The pictures were for some few years always thought to be the creations of a man, were treated as such; and when the rumour was first current that the painter was a woman—a girl—the great world of Paris laughed aloud in derision and utter disbelief.

Their force, their depth of tone, their anatomical accuracy, and above all their profound melancholy, made it impossible—so they said.

Nevertheless the world, which has lived to see many impossible things pass into the limbo of incontestable facts, lived to see this pass also.

'It is time they should know the truth,' said David Istrion, and told it. Etoile regretted that it should be told: to the pure ambitions of the true artist creation is paradise, but the praise of the crowd seems profanity.

But David Istrion had not had his own way unresisted for two-thirds of a century to consider such a trifle as anyone's personal desires.

He made the truth known; and within a year or two, she sprang at once into the fierce light that beats upon a throne—the contested and bitterly begrudged throne of genius.

David Istrion lived long enough to see her triumphs—not long enough to protect her from the dark shadows that slink in the path of all triumphs. Etoile became a name on the tongues of all Paris, and so on all the tongues of the world. She had a fame as great and as pure as is possible in this age, when fame is too often awarded by the mere screams of the vulgar. To her house, in the Paris winters, came many of the greatest men of her time. She influenced them much more than they influenced her. She had a life that was brilliant and rich in all fruits of the intellect.

As recreations of her leisure she wrote a comedy in verse which had a tumultuous success on a great stage, and some poems were printed in great reviews, all signed 'Etoile.' 'She has all

the talents,' said the world angrily. If she had only had all the vices too the world would not, perhaps, have minded so much.

Unfortunately for her reputation, no one could find out that she had as much as one vice. Few women could boast of being her friend, but no man could boast of being her lover.

Ten years now had gone by since she left the Meuse river; they had been ten years of brilliancy if not of happiness. Genius is seldom happy—except in its dreams or the first hours of its love.

With a woman, the vulgarity that lies in public adulation is apt to nauseate; at least if she be so little of a woman that she is not vain, and so much of one that she cares for privacy. For the fame of our age is not glory but notoriety; and notoriety is to a woman like the bull to Pasiphaë—whilst it caresses it crushes.

Fame brought Etoile its sweet and bitter fruits together.

'That is Etoile,' said everyone when she passed by. People who creep by in obscurity think this notice from mankind must be paradise.

All at once she grew tired of the brilliant success that surrounded her; it seemed tame, stupid, a twice-told tale. 'Oh! old world, have you nothing better?' she said thanklessly to the world which had been too prodigal of its laurels to her.

She lost zest in it all. A cough settled on her lungs. When her physicians bade her rest and go to Italy she was glad.

They said she had caught cold from working in clay. She had had that desire to create something excellent in sculpture which comes to most true painters; but her malady was not due to cold or clay; it was rather the fatal revenge entailed on any mortal who has exiled the passions and the affections, and who will sicken for them unconsciously; the most splendid structure of the intellect will always have this danger at its base.

CHAPTER V.

On the night when the Prince Ioris took the little three-cornered note of his friend to the Comtesse d'Avesnes the note was carried upstairs to a large *salon* on the first floor, of which the windows were standing open, giving to view the masses of trees on the Pincio and the Medici gardens and the brilliant stars of a winter's night. The naked and tawdry splendour of an hotel apartment was redeemed by masses of flowers that the present occupants of it had brought there—pale violets, snowy camellias, and early narcissi, born under glass, and showing their tender heads coyly, as if cold.

Against one of the open casements leaned

Etoile, wrapped in her furs—for the night was chilly—looking at the stars of Orion, which had arisen above the dark lines of the ilex trees, and listening to the fall of the fountain water in the square below.

She was fair of skin, and in form slender and supple, from living much out of doors and taking much exercise in the saddle and on foot; she had bright-hued hair that was lifted a little from her forehead, and eyes like the eyes of the boyish portrait of Shelley; her velvet skirts fell to her feet in the simple undulating folds that Leonardo da Vinci loved to draw. People were vaguely disappointed when they saw her; they would have liked her better in a man's coat, with her hair cut short, and generally odd and untidy-looking. An artist that you might by accident mistake for a duchess is annoying.

'What are you thinking of, Etoile?' said her companion, who was that wonderfully beautiful woman, brilliant as a pomegranate flower or a sapphire, who was at once Dorotea Coronis and the wife of the Duc de Santorin.

'I believe I was thinking of Actea.'

From the hotel she could see the dark masses of the trees on the Pincio, and the round dome of the church raised to lay the unholy spirit of Nero to rest.

'Poor Actea! The slave-girl redeems the age she lived in—'

'Rich Actea! happy Actea!' said Dorotea Coronis, with a sigh. 'Her beast was god to her. She never saw him as he was. No doubt she thought him too a great artist and a perfect poet. Love is blind.'

'Not the highest love, surely.'

'What do you know about it? You love nothing but your art.'

'That is Voightel's complaint.'

'Voightel is quite right. Why have you never cared for any man, Etoile?'

'Cared? Men are so admirable as friends; when they speak of warmer things than friendship they weary or they revolt me; I lose my regard for them and my patience with them. It is hard to give a reason for these things.'

'You are fortunate to be so cold.'

'Is it coldness? And is it fortunate? I am not so certain.'

'Whatever it is, it makes you many foes. You seem to say to men, "You are too stupid to succeed," and to women, "I am stronger than you."'

'I do not mean to say anything of the kind. It is true most people tire me. There is so little profundity in them, and one reads them so soon. A new acquaintance is like a new novel: you open it with expectation, but what you find there seldom makes you care to take it off the shelf a second time.'

'I am glad I am an old friend.'

Etoile smiled.

'Oh! old friends are our Homers and Horaces, our Shakespeares and Molières: we cannot read them too often, and we find something in them to suit all our moods. Why will you go away from me, dear Dorotea?'

The Duchesse Santorin laughed a little wearily.

'My dear! when M. le Duc must have two hundred thousand francs as his New Year's

étrennes! You forget I am not my own mistress, and the Petersburg engagement was signed this time last year.'

'I would give him no more. Surely your marriage contract protects you a little?'

'Entirely. But only *so* can I purchase his absence. He has outraged me in every kind of way, but he has not lost his legal rights. He never struck me before witnesses; and though he had mistresses all over Europe he did not bring one under the same roof with me. You see he is blameless.'

The lovely dark face of the great Spanish singer grew weary and full of scorn; she rose and walked to and fro the room restlessly.

'I wish you were not going to Russia,' said her friend, in a low tone, leaving the open window.

The Duchesse Santorin looked up quickly and paused in her rapid and passionate walk.

'You think I shall meet Fédor. You mistake. He has left the Imperial Guard and had himself ordered to the Caucasus by my wish. He is there, and he will be there all winter.'

'But who will believe that?'

'It does not matter what is believed. It matters what *is*.'

'To ourselves and the God we hope for—yes.'

'And what else matters? When we are "in the light that beats upon a throne" we are at once condemned unheard—for Envy and Mediocrity sit on the judgment-seat, and whenever did they wait for truth?'

In brave old Cordova, twenty years before, a tiny child with some gitaña blood in her had danced the *zaronga* with twinkling feet whenever a castanet clicked or a tambourine sounded—a child so beautiful that when her father, a picador, lay dying in the sand of the bull-ring he kissed her on the eyes and said, 'Though I go where I shall see the faces of the children of God, there will be no face so fair amongst them as my Dorotea's.'

She was only five years old then, but she never afterwards forgot the circle of sand, the stream of blood, the sea of faces, the great dead bull, the dying man whose last breath was a kiss to her.

His brethren of the tribe, unasked, took the

burden of her, shared between them the cost of her small wants, and housed her safely with good women, and even had her well taught by a priest; or taught, at least, as much as it is ever thought a Spanish girl can want to know apart from her lore of fan and rosary. The little Dorotea danced in every *patio* where the guitar was sounding, and sang in every church where the litanies were chaunting—a wild, gay, most lovely child; proud, too—so proud that the Cordovans would say to one another that perhaps the fables were true which had given to the picador the blood of an old kingly stock.

When she was growing a little out of childhood some one travelling through Cordova chanced to see and hear her sing.

The traveller was an old Jew whose errand in life was to find great singers for great theatres. He was an honest man and virtuous, though he loved money. He persuaded her protectors to sell him the little Dorotea. He took her away with him, and dealt gently with her, training her wonderful powers aright, and letting her know and hear nothing to her hurt. At sixteen she

sang in Italy, at seventeen in Paris. She had one of the purest voices that had been ever heard upon the stage, and her marvellous beauty and brilliancy made her fame even more than her voice. Dorotea Coronis was one of the wonders of the world. She had reached as great heights of perfection as any singer can, and every note that fell from her lovely lips brought a shower of gold.

Amongst her countless lovers came the Duc de Santorin, *Pair de France*, with his heart and his *couronne* in his hand, to lay at her feet. For it was well known that, to be won, she must be wooed, with due honour. After some reluctance and long refusal she became his wife. His passion for herself was hot but brief; his passion for her golden harvests lasted.

The pride in her which the people of Cordova had seen in the baby dancing the *zaronga* in their courts and gardens made the dignity and ancientness of his name allure her. She had no love for him, but neither had she any dislike. Those about her urged and persuaded her.

'I do not care for you, but you never shall be ashamed of me,' she said to him.

He swore gratitude and devotion. He did not keep his word, but she kept hers.

She had now been Duchesse de Santorin for some years, singing in all the cities of Europe to supply his demands, and with a right to a *tabouret* at the Court of France whenever Court of France there might be. The contrast sometimes made her laugh as she had used to laugh above her tambourine in the *patios* of old Cordova, only not with the same mirth. For five years they had been virtually separated, though still nominally of good accord. She had kept her word to him—she had been faithful. But of course the world did not think so.

Men were in love with her wherever her beautiful gazelle-like eyes rested, wherever her pure lark-like voice penetrated. The world knew very well that some of these—oh, yes, of course—and the world was inclined to pity the Duc de Santorin.

'She was a gitaña, you know, a gipsy; a little bare-legged, brazen thing, telling fortunes and rolling in the mud,' said the world feminine, jealous of that sovereign grace and that

incomparable art which Heaven had given to Dorotea Coronis.

Meanwhile there were many who loved and honoured her, and amongst them was Etoile.

They had become friends at the house of a famous Minister one night in Paris, after a representation of the 'Flauto Màgico,' and their friendship had endured.

'But the Caucasus,' said Etoile this evening, 'the Caucasus is not so very far that men cannot come back from it. Are you sure that Count Souroff——'

'Will do what I wish him? Yes.'

'No; I meant rather you of your own strength. When you are in his own country, when you know him amidst a half-savage people, in sickness and peril, wounded even, perhaps;—can you be sure that you will not yourself recall him?'

'Yes, I am sure. Because my resolve is for his sake, not my own. Listen, Etoile.'

She paused in her feverish movements to and fro the great chamber and stood before her friend.

'A woman who thinks for herself is weak, but the woman who thinks for another is strong. I will not let Fédor Souroff be my lover because I adore him with all my heart, all my soul, all my life. I am a Spanish woman if I am anything; I have fire, not water, in my veins; I have no duties towards my husband, because he has insulted me, robbed me, outraged me, beaten me, and told me a hundred times a year that I am only his bank, which he honours only too much by plunging his hand into it to seize its gold; only his mechanical nightingale, of which he keeps the key, with the title to wind it up and set it singing when he wills; or break it if it fail to sing. And yet—yet I will not be what they say I am to the man whom I worship, and who thinks holy the very stones or sand that feel my feet, and gives to me the noblest, tenderest, most loyal love that was ever given to a woman for her joy and pain. I will not—for his sake——'

'For his?'

'For his. You have seen him so little, else you would know why without asking. In the

first place, Santorin would shoot him dead. Santorin is base, but not so base as to sink to the *cocu content* of the modern world;—and Fédor would let Santorin shoot him. That would be what he would call only just. But this is the least thing. Fédor would gladly die so to purchase one hour with me. What would be far worse for him would be to live. What man is more wretched on earth than the bond slave of another man's wife? Fédor is young; he has a great name, he comes of a great family, who adore him; he is a fearless and devoted soldier. I will not ruin him—I will not. He would break his career for me; he would incur exile, confiscation, even the shame of a deserter for me; yes, and adore me the more because I doomed him to them. I will not take his sacrifice. My love, my love!—he is but mortal. He will not love for ever thus; not when love is but another name for disappointment. Men are not like us. In time he will forget me; he will be free; he will be happy.'

She ceased suddenly; a convulsion of violent weeping passed through her; she threw herself

prostrate on a couch and buried her beautiful head in her hands.

Etoile looked at her with tears in her own eyes; she forbore to speak; she knew that all the passionate, proud, and vehement nature of Dorotea Coronis was centred in this great passion, whose temptations it yet had strength to resist.

The windows were open and the stars shone in the dark; the sound of the fountains below came on the silence with the dull rumbling of the night traffic of Rome; the air was sweet and heavy with the smell of forced heliotrope with which they had filled a large bowl on a marble table.

'To love like that!' thought Etoile. 'It must be worth even all that pain.'

And for the first time in her life she felt solitary.

At that moment the servant brought her the note from the Casa Challoner and a bouquet of white flowers, lilies of the valley and narcissi, which the Prince Ioris had purchased in the flower-shop of the Via Condotti as he passed in the moonlight, and sent up with his own card, on

one of those unthinking impulses which sometimes imperilled all his prudence.

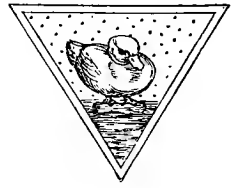
'What sweet lilies!' said Etoile, and forsook the stars for them, bending her face over their fragrance. Flowers were her earliest loves, and had never been displaced in her affections. Then she opened the Lady Joan's letter.

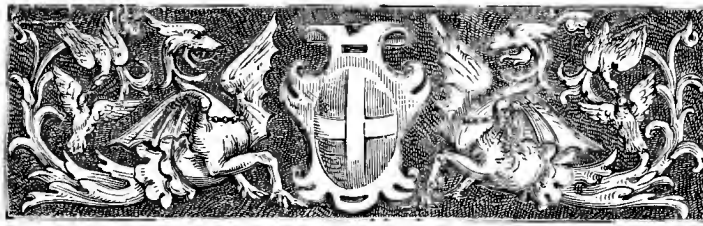
A few evenings before, in Paris, Voightel, shrewdest, keenest, and most merciless of wits and men, had been with her to bid her farewell.

'Go and see Archie's daughter, since he wishes it; go and see my Lady Joan,' had said the great Voightel—traveller, philologist, past-master in all sciences and all tongues, standing on her hearth, and glowering through his green spectacles, and his grizzled beard, till he looked like a magnified and cynical tom-cat. 'I have often talked to Joan of you. What is she like? Not a whit like Archie, but a handsome woman, and a clever woman in her way, which is not your way. Mérimée calls her his *pétroleuse*. It is inexact. *Pétroleuses* burn with no idea of ultimate booty: she would never waste her oil *so*. Cleopatra crossed with Dame du Comptoir were

nearer, I think. I admire her very much. I always know she is lying, and yet I am always pleased when she lies to please me. How contemptible! But all men are weak. I am inclined to respect women who *live* every hour of their lives. She does. You do not. You dream too much ever to live very vividly, unless you ever fall in love. I do so wish you would. It would make you so many friends. Men dislike a woman who will not be wooed. Believe that, my disdainful Etoile, who will be wooed by nobody. When a woman is "kind" to various men, each favoured mortal is bound, in honour, to arm *cap-à-pie* and swear she never was "kind" to anybody. Whereas, when she repulses and rebuffs them all round as you do, her lovers become her enemies, and will be more than human if they do not take her character away, out of the sincerity of their conviction that somebody must have been beforehand with them. Reasoning by analogy, I have very little doubt that Faustina was a wife of remarkable purity, and St. Agnes and Agatha very little better than they should have been. Go and see our dear

Joan. She is a faggot of contradictions; extraordinarily ignorant, but naturally intelligent; audacious, yet timid; a bully, but a coward; full of hot passions, but with cold fits of prudence. Had she your talent the world would have heard of her. As it is, she only enjoys herself. Perhaps the better part. Fame is a cone of smoke. Enjoyment is a loaf of sugar. I am not sure what she is doing in Rome, but I am quite sure she is in mischief, and quite sure she is making money. When the moon on the Forum has filled your brain with *schwärmerei*, go and see Joan. She is an admirable tonic for all poets. She will be the Prose of Rome for you. You will want prose there.'





CHAPTER VI.

At eight o'clock on the sixth of December, Etoile, Comtesse d'Avesnes, went up the many stairs of the Casa Challoner, to see for the first time the woman who was to be to her the Prose of Rome.

She herself was tired, and had little colour; she wore no jewels, and had only a knot of pale yellow tea-roses at her breast; her dress trailed softly, it was made up of black Chantilly laces and pale maize hues, and the deftest hands of Paris had cast the easy and simple grace of it together.

She went carelessly, indifferently, wondering if she should like these people as much as she liked Lord Archie; went to her fate as everyone

does, unwitting that in the commonplace passage of the hours Destiny was striking.

As she entered the anteroom, and laid aside her furs, she heard a voice singing a ritornello of the Roman populace, to the deep dulcet chords of a mandoline.

As her name was announced the voice ceased, and from between two curtains of Oriental silk, that shaded the inner doorway, there advanced, with outstretched hands, the singer, clad in black velvet, with a little collar of diamond stars at her throat, which sparkled as she moved. She had a classic head, fitly shaped for a bust of Athene, an Egyptian profile, brilliant eyes, green by day, black by night, thick eyebrows, and a cordial smile, that showed very white and even teeth.

'How charmed I am! At last we meet! How many many times I have tried to see you in Paris and Brussels!' cried the Lady Joan, with eager welcome, and with honest warmth.

'Your father's daughter can be nothing but my friend,' answered her new acquaintance, with sincerity.

Lady Joan, her guitar still in one hand, led

her guest with animated and eager compliment to the hearth; pushed a low chair nearer the wood fire, said some pretty words of her own father, and of their dear old Voightel, asked after other friends they had in common, spoke of the weather, and then, as by a mere careless after-thought, or accident, turned suddenly and presented a person who had all the while been standing close by, erect, calm, and unnoticed, like a lord in waiting beside a throne.

'Prince Ioris — the Comtesse d'Avesnes. Ioris is a great friend of my husband's, his dearest friend, indeed. Oh, of course, he has heard of *you*. Who has not? Only, of course, too, he knows you best as Etoile. We all do that. It is such a charming name!'

The Prince Ioris looked like a picture, and bowed like a courtier, and, leaning his arm on the mantelshelf, began to speak graceful nothings, in his melodious voice.

At that moment there entered, a little hurriedly, like an actor not on the stage in time for his cue, the gentleman with the Scotch face and the German manner, whom Lady Joan, with a

little frown on her darkling brows, presented as Mr. Challoner.

Mr. Challoner, the excellence of whose countenance was its unalterability under all circumstances whatever, stared through his eye-glass, bent himself stiffly, and in solemn phrase assured his guest of the supreme honour that he felt she had done to his threshold.

Immediately upon him there followed another of his guests, Mrs. Henry V. Clams, gorgeous in a gown that imprisoned her so tightly that it only permitted of the garb of a circus rider underneath it, and weighty with a perfect Golconda of rubies.

'No stones on her!—my word, and she must have got lots!' reflected Mrs. Henry V. Clams, staring at the tea-roses of Etoile, and settling in her own mind that artists were the most disappointin' people to look at, except princes, that ever she saw.

She was accompanied by the Marquis de Fontebranda, a Piedmontese about the Court, a fair, graceful, and good-looking man, who had trained her in the way she should go, and still

suffered many things from her love of colours and her need of dictionaries. Her husband had been invited, of course, but it was understood everywhere that he never came anywhere; he had always a cold, or letters in from N'York. Fontebranda had trained him as well.

The other guests arrived—an English Chief Justice, famous for his wit; a lady known to all Europe as the Marchioness of Cardiff, some Italians, some Russians; finally, a mature pet of the Lady Joan's, a white-haired and cosmopolitan Englishman, by name Silverly Bell, who was a most popular person at all the English tea-parties of the Continent, for nobody sugared your tea more prettily, or told you nastier stories of your neighbours more sweetly.

Dinner announced, Fontebranda was allotted to Etoile, Mr. Challoner offered his arm to Lady Cardiff, and the hostess went in with Mr. Challoner's dearest friend.

'What do you think of her, Io?' she murmured in his ear.

'*Pas grand' chose!*' he murmured back indifferently, with a little shrug of his shoulders.

The Lady Joan's grey-green eyes sparkled happily. She believed him.

The dinner was well appointed, quiet, and unpretentious; the dishes were not too numerous, and were all good; the flowers were in old Faenza bowls; the china was old white and gold Ginori, the glass Venetian, the fruit superb. All went well, and there was only one discord, the voice of Mrs. Henry V. Clams, but that is a kind of discord which in the present construction of society is to be heard everywhere, from mountain-tops to throne-rooms.

Mrs. Henry V. Clams thought again and again what 'disappointin' people' artists were.

Etoile chanced to say very little.

Sometimes in society she was very silent, sometimes very eloquent. Minds like hers resemble running brooks: they reflect what they pass through; they are still or sparkling, dark or radiant, according as they flow over sand or moss, under black cloud or sunny sky: the brook is always the same; it is what it mirrors that varies.

Mrs. Henry V. Clams—who herself was quite

independent of circumstance or surroundings, and whose torrents of questions and bubbles of curiosity and chatter never ceased on any occasion, and never had been known to cease, except once at a Drawing-room in London, and once at a total eclipse of the sun, on both of which occasions she had owned to being 'that cowed she was right down mum'—stared at Etoile across the table, and said to her next neighbour, that 'sure*ly* there was nothing like clever people for being daft.'

Her neighbour being the English Chief Justice, a very clever and merry person himself, assented heartily to the proposition, but begged her to reflect.

'My dear lady, if talent weren't a little daft as you say, how on earth would the great majority ever be got to stand it at all? Consider the enormous utility of genius looking now and then like a fool.'

Mrs. Henry V. Clams stuffed her mouth with a *bouchée*, and smiled vaguely. She did not understand, and Fontebranda was too far off to be telegraphed to for explanations.

'If that *be* Etoile, why don't she talk and amuse us?' mused meanwhile, like Mrs. Henry V. Clams, a very different person, the Marchioness of Cardiff, whose heart and soul had been bequeathed to her unaltered from an ancestress of the days of Louis XIV., and who never could see why artists wanted Christian burial, or were asked to dinner, or any of that sort of thing.

'Is that really Etoile, did you say? *the* Etoile, you know?' she asked of her host.

'Yes, yes,' assented Mr. Challoner, not being certain whether he ought to be very triumphant over his guest, or somewhat ashamed of her. 'Dear Lord Archie is fond of her—begged us to do what we could—you know his good nature—my wife inherits it. Dear Lady Cardiff, do try these larded quails.'

'She looks a much better bred one than you do, my dear sir,' thought her ladyship, withdrawing her eyeglass from Etoile to the quails.

'You said you liked to meet celebrities—that it amused you,' said her host with an accent of apology in his voice. 'Of course, of her great genius there can be no question.'

'Of course, of course! and I am charmed,' said her ladyship, occupied with her first mouthful of a larded quail. 'Tell her to come to my Mondays. I'll tell her myself after dinner. She's very well dressed. Is it Worth?'

'Most likely; she is said to be extravagant.'

'I am sure she has a right to be; how nice it must be to make your own money, and spend it, and never be bothered with trustees! Oh yes, Worth, beyond any doubt. The way he ties a bow one never can mistake. And just that tea-rose too—very pretty, very pretty indeed. What different things he gives people he likes, to what he will do for mere millionaires like our dear Mrs. Henry V. Clams.'

Etoile, unconscious of the criticism, ruffled the tea-roses amongst her old lace, divided her few words between Fontebranda and a Count Serge Roublezoff who sat on the other side of her, looked often at her hostess, whose bright eyes flashed back honest kindly smiles to hers, and, without knowing very well why she did so, watched the man whom Lady Joan had installed in the seat of honour.

He was very tall and slender, with that look of distinction which, though not always attendant on a great race, is never found outside it; he had high delicate features, and an oval beardless face, a soft olive skin, thoughtful pensive brows, and those eyes which at once allure and command women; he had a beautiful voice, infinite grace and softness of manner, and in aspect might have stepped down off any canvas of Velasquez or Vandyke. Etoile noticed that he was scrupulously alive to every want of the Lady Joan's; he bowed his head in resigned silence, whenever she contradicted him, which she did twice in every five minutes; he called her Madame with the strictest ceremony, and addressed Mr. Challoner across the length of the table as 'mon cher,' with more friendly effusion than seemed needful, on more occasions than were natural. Occasionally he looked across at Etoile herself.

His eyes were thoughtful, dreamy, when he chose, absolutely unrevealing; they had the drooped languid amorous lids and the long dark lashes of his country. Wherever his eyes lighted, Lady Joan's followed and lighted too.

As he looked he was thinking, as long afterwards he told Etoile—

'That woman is half a saint and half a muse.

'She has never loved.

'She is full of idealities.

'She has strong passions, but they sleep.

'Her dreams are the enemies of men.

'She does not care for the world.

'She has been used to her own way, and she has treated all men with indifference; some few with friendship; none with tenderness.

'She seems cold; but I think she is only uninterested.

'She is all mind. Her senses have never stirred. She does not belong to our world.

'She has thoughts that go far away from us.

'She has not enough frivolity to enjoy her own generation.

'She has lovely eyes: they say so much without knowing that they say anything.

'She has beautiful hands.

'She is dressed perfectly.

'I shall detest her.

'Or I shall adore her.

'Which of the two? I do not know.

'Perhaps both.'

So he thought of Etoile, watching her across the table whilst he talked with polite attention to his hostess, who snapped him short with her curt, sharp, bright humour, and seldom allowed him to finish a sentence.

He looked very much like a grave, slender deerhound held down under a keeper's leash.

There was pride in his eyes and high spirit on his aquiline features, but at the table of the Challoners he was subdued and silent; or at other moments over-assiduous to please. Etoile noticed this; and wondered what relation he bore to them. She gathered from what was said by him and to him that he was a noble of Rome; a courtier; and the owner of an estate to which they constantly referred as Fiordelisa, but which seemed by some inexplicable arrangement to be the Lady Joan's property also.

'What beautiful grapes!' the Chief Justice chanced to say, 'finest where all are fine. They are your own growth?'

The Lady Joan nodded assent.

'Yes; they're all off my vines—down at Fiordelisa.'

'You like grapes, Madame?' said Ioris to Etoile, who was opposite to him. 'Oh! you must allow me to send you some—from Fiordelisa.'

'What is Fiordelisa?' thought Etoile. She did not know that, although Fiordelisa was the property of Ioris, Ioris was still more absolutely the property of the Lady Joan.

'What a pretty name, Fiordelisa!' she hazarded as she thanked him.

Lady Joan interrupted his reply.

'Yes; it was a beastly old barrack when we went in it: but we have done no end to improve it, inside and out,' said the hostess, cracking a walnut.

Etoile fancied that the face of the Roman Prince grew a shade paler still, as with anger, but she thought it might be only her fancy; all artists are fanciful. He drew a flower out of one of the bowls near him, and busied himself fastening it into his buttonhole.

Dinner over, they sauntered into one of the three or four little salons of the house; a

little room with Smyrna carpets and comfortable couches, and a great many pictures, and a great deal of china. Here the Lady Joan opened her cigar-case, threw herself back at ease, and expressed her hope that everybody smoked.

Everybody did, except Etoile.

'Ah! Comtesse, you are right and wise not to do so,' said the Prince Ioris, as he crossed over to her. 'Smoking has no grace upon a woman's lips, and little sense on ours.'

The Lady Joan hastily crossed over also, her cigar in her hand.

'What things you do say, Io,' she muttered, crossly. 'You know Lady Cardiff smokes like a steam-engine. How stupid you were at dinner, too! Go and amuse the Chief Justice; you see Mr. Challoner's boring him to death.'

He went obedient, but not resigned, to address the Chief Justice, with all the warm and charming courtesy of his habitual manner, which *en vrai Italien*, was never warmer or more charming than when he was somewhat annoyed and very much wearied. The Lady Joan presented Lady Cardiff to the Comtesse d'Avesnes,

and, content with the diversion she had effected, repaid herself with joining her male guests, and receiving a person who just then entered, and whom she saluted delightedly as her 'very dear old Mimo!'

The very dear old Mimo—otherwise Count Burletta—was a very shrewd person, of some fifty years old, fat and fair, smiling and serene. Fate had given him a meagre purse and a keen eye; he rambled about Rome, in and out all sorts of odd places, and about three o'clock might be found at home any day, surrounded with the fruits of his rambles, ivories, enamels, tarsia work, china, cloisonné, lac, anything and everything that garrets and palaces, cellars and convents, could be persuaded to render; in society he was a gentleman, and could lie like one; in his shop he was honest—unless he met with a fool—fools, he thought, were sent by the saints as food was sent by Elijah's ravens—he was a very good Catholic.

The very dear old Mimo, dropping now down on the divan beside her, murmured to her many things in a low tone, unheard by ears profane,

and then drew out her guitar from under a pile of music.

'Io!' called the Lady Joan; 'where's that last song of the Trastevere you wrote down for me?—the one we heard the girl sing as we came home from the Valle the other night?'

Ioris left the Chief Justice and searched for the song.

Being found, the Lady Joan would not sing it—she sang something else; the riband of her old Spanish guitar hanging over her shoulder; her sweeping velvet and her shining stars making a fine study for a painter; her handsome teeth gleaming and her eyes flashing up to her listeners with an amorous glittering gaze that burned its way straight up to the face of Ioris, who leaned towards her and beat the time softly with his hand, and gave back the answering glance that it was his due and his duty to give. But——

'That man is only feigning; why does he have to feign?' thought the Countess d'Avesnes, and looked to see if Mr. Challoner observed what she did.

Mr. Challoner was too well drilled by thirteen

years of wedded life ever to observe anything; Mr. Challoner at the other end of the room discussed political news with the Chief Justice in an undertone, so as not to disturb his wife's singing. He never disturbed his wife; he was the marital model of the nineteenth century. There are many like him; but not perhaps many quite so perfect.

His wife's singing was agreeable, though she sang out of time and her accent was harsh; still, she had a rich voice naturally, and could give the songs of the populace, and the erotic lays of the streets and fields, with a force and a *brio* hardly to be surpassed by the Romans themselves.

It was not pure execution nor perfect phrasing, and it used to set the teeth of real musicians on edge, but there was something contagious and intoxicating in it as she struck deep vibrations from the chords and poured from her glances a passionate light. She never looked so well as when she sang; it sent warmth into her lips and took the hardness from her face; singing, the passion that was in the woman broke up from the shrewd worldly sense, and the prosaic temper, that covered and hid it; singing, she looked

like the swart sovereign of Musset's poem, who laughed to see the bold bull die, and flung her broidered garter to her lover the matador.

'Allow me to compliment you on your gown, my dear Comtesse,' said Lady Cardiff, meanwhile seated beside Etoile. 'You must be tired of compliments on your talents. What charming things Worth does for people of taste! He *clothes* Mrs. Henry V. Clams over yonder, you know; what a difference! I am so glad you condescend to think about dress. It brings you nearer our poor humanity; genius so often, you know——'

'Is too much like St. Simeon Stylites; I quite agree with you. There is more affectation in sackcloth than in silk. Besides, to be dressed with taste is a pleasure to oneself. What do you call that remarkable person who thinks it necessary to load herself with rubies for a little dinner party?'

'Mrs. Henry V. Clams. Fontebranda has made her, forced her down all our throats; very cleverly he has done it. He's no money, you know, and they've heaps. As somebody said of

somebody in the last century (Duc d'Orléans, wasn't it?), not being able to make her Marquise Fontebranda, which I am sure he'd be very sorry to do, he has made himself Mr. Henry V. Clams, and I think it pays him very much better.'

'I see. Do you visit them?'

'Oh, of course. Everybody visits them. They entertain very well; it's all Fontebranda. Are you staying long in Rome?'

'All the winter, I think.'

'Delighted! I hope it's not true what they say—that your lungs are affected?'

'A little, I fear; nothing serious.'

'Ah, dear me. Aldebaran—you should inhale Aldebaran. Do get a bottle. Consumption cured for half-a-crown; you know the thing I mean.'

'I have more faith in the Roman air. Who is that person tuning Lady Joan's guitar?'

'Her very dear old Mimo? Well, that is—Mimo,—Count Burletta, you know. A good creature. Tradesman from twelve to four; Count all the rest of the day and night. If you want to buy teacups and triptychs, ask Lady Joan to take you there; and, if you want to

please, pay, and don't ask the age of the object. Mean? Oh, I mean nothing. Mimo is a connoisseur—everybody is a connoisseur here—and gives ignorant people the benefit of his knowledge. That is all. How do you like her singing?'

'Well, you see, I am too used to great music to be very easily pleased. The first musicians of Paris gather at my house, and then my friend Dorotea sings to me alone so constantly.'

'Ah, the Duchesse Santorin. She is here, isn't she?'

'She is gone. She only came to see me one day. She was engaged at Petersburg. She has promised me to return in two months.'

'Tell me, do tell me. You must know. Is it true that Santorin has sent her a citation to appear; that he is about to sue for a separation?'

'He has sent her a schedule of his latest debts. That is all that I know of——'

'But there is some scandal about that handsome Russian, Souroff, that Imperial aide-de-camp—you know whom I mean. What is his name? Fédor?'

'There is no cause for any; that I can assure you. Count Souroff is in the Caucasus.'

'Dear me!' said Lady Cardiff vaguely, disappointed, but reflecting that of course the friend of the Duchesse Santorin must *say* that sort of thing.

'Lady Joan looks very handsome as she sings,' said Etoile, to change the theme.

The English peeress put her glass up to her eye, and looked at the singer.

'A good-looking woman, yes, and highly-born, and young still, and no fool, and yet married to a Mr. Challoner!'

'There are very odd things in life, are there not?' continued the Marchioness musingly. 'Nothing odder than its Mr. Challoners. You know her father? Indeed! A charming person: very unlike *her*, don't you think? Yes, I am going; sorry to leave you, but I must look in at the Ruspoli's. I shall slip out quietly while she is making that noise. So charmed you have come to Rome, my dear Comtesse. Pray, don't forget my Mondays.'

'I suppose people do receive her?' said Lady

Cardiff to her host, who rushed to intercept her passage, and escort her down the stairs.

'Whom? Etoile? Oh, certainly, there never was a breath against her.'

'Oh, my dear Mr. Challoner, I don't mean that. What *does* that matter? We receive tens of thousands of people with nor'-westers blowing them black and blue'—(Mr. Challoner winced)—'every day of their lives. Heaps of good people are out of society, and heaps of bad people in; only we can't receive anybody unless other folks receive her too. Nobody can *begin*, you know. It gets thrown against you afterwards; if a woman is really received, it don't in the least matter what she's done or what she does do. Nobody's any business with the rest of her life. *Is* she received? That is all. As for this particular woman, she is charming. And, of course, everybody *you* know has the passport to my house, and every other house. Coming to the Ruspoli's? No? Ah, true! You don't know them. Pity. Many thanks. Very cold. Thanks. Good evening.'

And, having wrapped up many thorns in

velvet in her parting speech, the Marchioness of Cardiff rolled away in her carriage to the Palazzo Ruspoli, leaving Mr. Challoner bowing on the step in the teeth of the sharp easterly wind, with all the thorns pricking in him as he turned and went upstairs. Happily for himself, he had a tough epidermis, and could remain impenetrable to thorns and even harpoons. Mr. Challoner knew that nothing answers in the long run like invulnerability.

His wife was still singing when he entered, and her very dear old Mimo was praising a little Masolino panel to the Chief Justice, who did not know much about art, but was very open-handed with his money, all the world knew.

The Prince Ioris, having gazed his heart out through three songs, and made his eyes utter more amorous lyrics than any she sang, thought he had done what duty required of him, and sank away quietly into a corner of the sofa by Etoile, and picked up some fallen leaves of the tea-roses, and talked with serious feeling and graceful taste of various themes of art, and gazed at her as he did so with that musing

studious regard which is the subtlest form of early homage.

The Lady Joan saw, and sang out of time for two seconds. The Lady Joan threw her guitar aside with a haste and force that imperilled its safety, and came out of her little circle of admiring listeners, and bore down on the sofa where Ioris was still tossing a few fragrant tea-rose leaves in his hand and talking of art.

'Go with her to-morrow to the Loggè?' she called out sharply. 'What are you thinking of, Io? You've got to take me to the studios; and then there is that bust to see to at Trillo's, and the Bishop of Melita coming to luncheon, and there are heaps of things in the afternoon. You can't go anywhere to-morrow. Besides, she's got old Padre Marcello—a man who carries more art-knowledge about Rome in his little finger than you do in all your brain, which is not the very biggest to hold anything.'

She laughed as she spoke, and blew some smoke round her classic hand.

Ioris bowed resignedly.

'I am at your commands, madame, of course, as always.'

'Oh, are you!' said his hostess, roughly, too out of temper to be able to control the irritability she felt. 'Then another time don't keep me twenty minutes waiting, as you did this morning at Trillo's: what were you after?'

'I was at the Vatican.'

'Well, you must be here to-morrow at ten. Mind that; and see Pippo has the new curb on; he jibbed dreadfully yesterday. Are you going? So early? I am so sorry; it is only eleven o'clock,' she continued, with her frankest pleasantest smile, as Etoile rose from the sofa, unconscious that her rose-leaves had been falling on a volcano's brink.

'We must be friends for my father's sake,' said Lady Joan; 'how glad I am you came to Rome!' and she followed her through the rooms and the ante-room, with cordial phrases and a dozen pleasant kindly plans for future intimacy and mutual amusement.

Ioris, evading direction, reached down the

furs, and enveloped with them the maize and black bows of Worth, and gave Etoile his arm.

'How handsome she is, and very agreeable,' said Etoile, as they went downstairs.

Ioris was silent.

'You are a friend of Lord Archie's?' he said, after a moment's pause—a pause, it seemed to her, of some slight embarrassment.

'Yes; I know him well—dear gentle Lord Archie.'

'I also am fond of Lord Archie.'

'Are you any relation to them?'

'None at all,' replied Ioris, with a certain impatience. 'I may have the honour to call on you, madame. Perhaps I may be of some little use. No doubt you will know everyone in Rome, but anything that I could do——'

Mr. Challoner overtook them on the staircase, with Mrs. Henry V. Clams and Fontebranda, who were leaving also.

'My wife wants you, Ioris,' said the gentleman; 'there is some other song that can't be found.'

'You have forgotten this, madame,' said Ioris, in the street, as he escaped from Mr. Challoner,

putting the big black Spanish fan through the window of the carriage. 'And do not heed what the Lady Joan said. I will have the honour of waiting on you to-morrow at noon for the Loggè, and although certainly I cannot compete in knowledge with the Padre Marcello, still, if zeal and devotion can serve you at all in this my native city——'

The horses, impatient, reared and plunged forward on the uneven pavement of the street, and left his phrase unfinished upon Etoile's ear.

He looked a moment into the moonlight, then reascended the stairs.

'Io!' cried the Lady Joan; 'come and make me some fresh cigarettes. Now we can enjoy ourselves. Mimo's got such a capital story; awfully *salato*, but so good.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE Lady Joan Challoner came of a very good old stock.

The Perth-Douglas family was one about whose ancientness and admirableness there could never be any dispute. The Perth-Douglases had always been gentlefolks, and their names could be read backwards by the light of history as far as the days of Flodden and of Bannockburn. Though of such knightly descent, they were very poor, and of no great estate; but they were own cousins to the mighty Earl of Hebrides, had intermarried with the no less mighty Marquises of Lothian, were cousins-german to the Dukes of Lochwithian and the Lords of Fingal, and

owned Scotch cousinships to more peers than the Order of the Thistle embraces, and as many baronets as the Nova Scotia riband adorns.

Her father, Archibald Angus Perth-Douglas, fifth Earl of Archiestoune—always called by his friends Archie—had no seat in the Lords, and was glad of a Government place, and a small office at Court. He was an infinitely charming person, whom everybody loved and caressed. Her mother had been a beauty and a wit; her grandmother the same. The Lady Joan, at nineteen, had been married to Mr. Robert Challoner, an obscure gentleman, whose parentage was doubtful, and whose prosperity was dubious. People had wondered very much why such a handsome well-born girl as Joan Perth-Douglas should be married to a Mr. Challoner.

If she had been a trifle cleverer than the clever woman she was, of course she would have told people she had adored him, and had insisted on having him and none other. But as she always told everybody roundly that she had always hated him, this explanation could not be put forward by even her blindest admirers.

There were one or two people who did know why—really why—but a popular and eminent politician had been trustee to the marriage settlements, and no one could be indiscreet enough to persist in inquiring why the settlements ever had been drawn up at all.

The Lady Joan all her life long was rich in discreet friends.

Still even the discreetest friends will, like the closest-packed hold of a ship, leak occasionally. Salt water and secrets are alike apt to ooze. So, whatever the reason might be, the Challoners lived out of England.

The Perth-Douglases were clever people, and had had the knack of always frequenting the society of cleverer people than themselves. Without ever having distinguished themselves intellectually, they yet had thus gained an intellectual reputation; and on the feet of their ladies there had been often stockings of blue.

For gentle, gracious, handsome Earl Archie, his women were too many and too strong, and they worried him sorely; he consoled himself with society which was always delighted to console

him. His wife—beautiful and masterful—and his mother and sisters, not so beautiful, but masterful too, disputed and quarrelled and vexed him. He was a man who thought peace the one supreme good of life, but he was seldom destined to enjoy it. His lot was cast throughout existence amidst *maîtresses-femmes:* they are admirable and wonderful beings, no doubt, but no man ever found them conducive to his comfort as companions.

Of his daughter Lord Archie had never felt that he knew very much. He had thought the marriage a very odd one and a very disadvantageous one, and had done his best in his gentle, sweet-tempered, tranquil fashion to oppose it. But when he was told by his wife and his old friend the eminent politician that it had to be, and was the best thing that could be, he acquiesced, because acquiescence had become his habit with his numerous feminine rulers.

He was not behind the scenes; and they told him a great many fictions of the Challoner fortune and the Challoner devotion: after all it was as the girl liked, it was her affair more than anyone's.

Gentle Lord Archie thought everything was for the best in this best of all possible worlds. He never worried himself or anybody else. He gave away his daughter at the altar, to what he stigmatised in his own soul as a cad, with the same benign placidity with which, a dozen years afterwards, he lay in the sunshine and smoked his cigars under the walnut trees at Fiordelisa: everything was all right—that was Lord Archie's formula. It is the only one possible for a man governed by three generations of women with wills of their own.

Thirteen years had gone by since Lord Archie had led his daughter up to the marriage altar, wondering why Joan, who had been a good deal admired at her first drawing-room, and had spirit enough for fifty cavalry soldiers, had not waited a little while and done better for herself.

Thirteen years found the Lady Joan still a young woman.

She had swept a good deal of adventure into the dozen and one seasons that Mr. Challoner's name had been her sunshade in the heats of slander, and her waterproof in the storms of censure.

Mr. Challoner's business, in which he had risen from a clerk to a managing partner, lying in Damascus and Aleppo, she had had the far East and the vague sand-plains of distant countries for her theatre; and, in spite of steam and of electricity — those fatal levellers of illusion—the 'far Orient' still remains to the European mind a shadowy and gorgeous panorama of mystery.

Perhaps through that golden haze of distance the European mind saw the adventures of the Lady Joan, as in a mirage, multiplied; at any rate, home-coming travellers told many tales, and averred that 'Archie's daughter' was 'going it over there.' She had Asiatic ministers for her henchmen, and Turkish pashas for her obedient slaves; big bankers were as babies in her hands, and imperial steamers were at her beck and call; when a good-looking wayfarer chanced to have time for such pastimes, she would have her Arab steeds saddled and scamper away with him over the Syrian Desert; and a young titled Giaour on his pilgrimage found no resting-place more agreeable than her flat house-top in Damascus, with

champagne in the ice-pails, and Mr. Challoner in his counting-house.

If anybody thought it odd that she should camp out on the sand plains with strangers, such people were old fogies in the Lady Joan's eyes; these men were all her brothers—a kind providence sent them to prevent her yawning her head off with the intolerable boredom of Mr. Challoner's company—and she would jump on her mare, and cut her across the ears, and scamper off with silver-mounted pistols in her sash, and a cigar in her mouth, knowing very well that Mrs. Grundy cannot do you much harm when you ride under the shadow of Mount Lebanon. And even had Mrs. Grundy loomed there in the stead of Mount Lebanon, she could have said nothing, because Mr. Challoner himself never said anything.

He busied himself with his exports of jewellery and prayer-carpets, of spice and specie, of rubies and rice, and his business generally, and his fellow merchants, and his own reflections; and moved about Damascus, and other cities of the East, a very big man amongst the Jews and

Gentiles, the Turks and the Persians, because of the Perth-Douglas connection away in the North, and the privilege it bestowed on him to ask any travelling Englishman of rank to dinner and speak of 'my wife's cousins,' the Countess of Hebrides, or the Duchess of Lochwithian.

When, some six years later, having ruined a very fine business by too fine speculations, he found it expedient to leave the bazaars and retreat on his wife's settlements, she brought with her from the red Eastern skies a duskier hue on her handsome face, a great skill at rolling cigarettes, much good Turkish tobacco, and some good Oriental jewellery, some trash and some treasure out of the bazaars, a great many souvenirs—some tender, some fierce—and a decided experience that she might play 'poker' with all the Ten Commandments, so long as she wrapped herself in the proof armour of Mr. Challoner's approval and acquiescence.

She had learnt by heart the Arab proverb, that 'she who has her husband with her may turn the moon around her finger.'

So useful was her husband, indeed, that at

weak moments she was almost grateful to him, and absolutely called him Robert, a condescension very rare with her, as she never let him or anybody forget that she had a right to write herself 'born Perth-Douglas.'

But the Black Sea once crossed again, the Lady Joan saw Mrs. Grundy, the British Bona Dea, looming large on her horizon, as the Colossus once did upon the sea from Rhodes.

The Lady Joan was shrewd enough to know that the British Bona Dea will not believe that all men are your brothers. The Lady Joan pulled her mainsail in, and tacked her course so as to pass safely under the Colossus.

It had not been worth while out there, but here it was so. And, after all, it was better to keep decently well with that little house in Mayfair, and all the family ties and honours. The little house had borne a great deal indeed, as little houses when they are the abode of a Great House often do; great houses never washing their dirty linen in the street. But Lady Joan knew that there were some things that would be too strong even for the little house in Mayfair, and that it would

never do not to dine there when she went over 'on business' to London, though she had to scream till she was hoarse into her grandmother's ear-trumpet, and derived no pleasure from hearing the Head of the Opposition read his 'Notes on the Œcumenical Council' or his conception of an obscure passage of Tertullian.

So, for sake of the little house in Mayfair, and of a great many big houses all over Europe that she desired to enter, the Lady Joan, leaving the Bagdad bazaars and the Great Desert, left her imprudence behind her, and consigned everything of a dangerous sort to oblivion, except the Sultan's inspiration of her letters to the *Planet* newspaper, and the pearls with which the Emir of Yarkund had presented her for saving his life from poison.

For, on touching a European strand, the hand of Mrs. Grundy clasped her, and the shadow of Mrs. Grundy fell on her as in eclipse falls the shade of the stolid earth upon the giddy moon.

In the East, Lady Joan had been very young, very reckless, with her spirits far outbalancing

her prudence, and her savageness at her exile and social extinction avenging itself by all those wild night-rides with the good-looking travellers, and all those campings out under the desert stars, with nobody to play propriety except the Arab boys and the tethered ponies.

The Lady Joan in her childhood, even in the year or two between her presentation at Court and her social extinction under the Challoner settlements, had seen the really great world. All that was best in society had habitually gathered round her beautiful mother. She knew what mighty people and witty people, and people of fashion and people of genius were. For the Anglo-Persian world of shabby adventurers, of hungry commercial folks, of intriguing speculators, of oily Jews, of lean Gentiles, and of trade-fattened nobodies her contempt had been naturally boundless. She had done as she liked, and scoffed at the whole lot, and only smiled on them when she wanted a steamer or any such little trifle of them. She was a Perth-Douglas; and if she chose to dance the Carmagnole in all their counting-houses, the mercantile mud of

Asia Minor could only be honoured: so she danced it.

But when the chill colossal shadow of Mrs. Grundy fell across her path Lady Joan saw that she must mend her ways. It was not steamers that she would want now, but suffrages.

Of course she despised Mrs. Grundy as much as she had despised the mercantile mud; Mrs. Grundy was an old cat, and represented old cats collectively. Still it was necessary to conciliate her, and even in the country of the *cicisbei* it would be best to be on good terms with Society.

Of course Society should never really interfere with her liberty; of course Society should never prevent her regarding all men as her brothers; of course Society should never alter her dancing the Carmagnole over the *convenances*, as she had done over the counting-houses whenever she liked; nevertheless, she said to herself she would reconcile herself with Society.

There were many things to be got by it, and Society after all asks very little. Society only asks you to wash the outside of your cup and platter: inside you may keep any kind of nasti-

ness that you like; only wash the outside; do wash the outside, says Society; and it would be a churl or an ass indeed who would refuse so small a request.

Lady Joan set to work and washed her cup and platter with such a clatter and so many soap-suds, and summoned so many good people to look on at her doing it, that no one could possibly ask her what she drank and ate out of it, nor who sipped from it with her.

Mr. Challoner himself set both cup and platter upon a shelf in the sight of Society. Society could want no more.

As lawless free-lances in days of old entered monkish cells and buried Dick the Devil or Dent du Sanglier for ever under Brother Philarete or Father Joseph, so the Lady Joan, entering society, immured her Eastern escapades under the seal of an entire self-oblivion. Nothing was ever to be remembered by anybody that she wished to be forgotten. This was settled. It is a demand that women are very fond of making on the good-nature or the good taste of mankind. And if occasionally she met an old friend uncivil

enough or unkind enough, without knowing that he did wrong, to 'hint past history' and disturb the present, she would, with all the heartiest air of candour and of wonder in the world,

> Stare upon the strange man's face
> As one she ne'er had known,

and continue so to stare in despite of all recollections that he might invoke.

It was still a marriage for which none could see any *raison d'être.* But when you go to the East and stay there in a kind of golden mist it is easy to leave explanations behind you when you return. All that trading of the Levant in various goods, from bales of hay to squares of prayer-carpet, to which Mr. Challoner owed his being, had come to an untimely ending, as was well enough known, from Bagdad to Brindisi, by all merchants and bankers. And Mr. Challoner had only saved a few thousands out of the crash, and was, in real truth, an unfortunate gentleman with a hankering turn for speculation.

But the Lady Joan was not troubled by such little facts as these; the magnificence of her imagination raised her far above all prosaic

realities; what a few old fogies in bank parlours or on public exchanges, might say or know was nothing to her; according to her Mr. Challoner had been Crœsus; the rice and the carpets were merged vaguely into what she called 'our bank;' Solomon's Temple had not been more gorgeous than the fortunes to which her family had sacrificed her.

There had been failures; yes, certainly there had been failures; but then even Crœsus could not escape Cyrus.

As for what those old fools of consuls and merchants said, that was all rubbish; and she would close with an apotheosis of herself as a sort of Semiramis of Finance, in which the angels who upheld her in the empyrean were 'dear old Pam,' and 'dear old Thiers,' and 'dear old Elgin,' and anybody else of magnitude appropriate whom she had ever had a nod from in her babyhood in her grandmother's little house in Mayfair.

There was, indeed, scarce a great man in France, England, or Germany whom she did not claim as her 'dearest old' A, B, or C; if a critic or a chancellor, a *savant* or a general, a

geologist or a Prime Minister had ever walked thirty years before into her mother's drawing-room when she was playing on the hearthrug with her alphabet, the critic or chancellor, the *savant* or general, the geographer or Prime Minister was now for ever in the mouth of the Lady Joan as her one dearest old friend, that was more devoted to her than any other living creature on the face of the earth.

Perhaps she had recalled herself once to their bewildered memories in some crowded reception; perhaps she had bowed to them twice in the Prater, the Bois, or the Mall; perhaps she never had seen them at all since the days of her alphabet; all this mattered nothing; the critic or chancellor, *savant*, general, geographer, or Prime Minister never were by when she dilated upon them with such glowing affection; and, even if they had been, would have been too polite to contradict her. Gentlemen do not contradict women, nor yet show them up; a chivalrous weakness of mankind, of which the weaker sex always takes the very sternest advantage.

Occasionally those disagreeable and sceptical

people who are to be found spoiling all society would hint that, with such distinguished friendships and such illimitable political and literary connections, it was a little wonderful that the Lady Joan should have married a Mr. Challoner and take an interest in teacups and triptychs. But such people were in the minority. For the most part, her use of her dearest old A, B, and C, at moments when A was organising a great war, or B busied in discrowning kings, or C sending forth on the world a great book mighty as Thor's hammer, was of infinite gain to her; and her allies would go hither and thither, important and confidential, and whisper, 'She knew the declaration of war five days before anybody;' or 'He wrote to her the very night he dictated his abdication;' or 'She had an early copy even before it went to the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*;' and these fictions flew about lively as gnats and productive as bees, and secured many cards to her big Delft card-plate, because, though nobody believed all of it, everybody said some of it must be true—yes, a great deal of it must be true—because people never will admit or even think

that they are the mere dupes of a brilliant audacity.

To the world in general A, B, and C were names of magnitude and weight, of awe or of adoration, as the case might be; but to her they were only 'dear old creatures.' Had they not stumbled over her alphabet thirty years before upon her mother's hearthrug?

It was an alliance for a lifetime.

According to the Lady Joan she was a Nausicaa, airily frolicking on the edge of the vast ocean of European complications; and Odysseus had gone through all his woes and warfare, and only lay in wait under the waves, just to be ready to catch her ball for her—only just for that.

Odysseus never even saw her, never even thought of her, as he waded in his deep dark seas; but all that did not matter to her.

Nor to her associates.

'Such a woman! ah, such a woman!' would murmur plump Mimo Burletta. 'Palmerstonè relied on her for all his secret information of Oriental things; Palmerstonè told her when she was eighteen that if she were but a man she

would die Prime Minister of the Crown; Palmerstonè was not one to call a lemon-pip a lemon —ah, no, no, no!—Palmerstonè knew!' And Burletta would walk about and spread out his fat hands in honest adoration of her mighty powers and of himself for being the confidant of so great a creature; and in his mind's eye, when it was not concentred on teacups and triptychs, always beheld the Lady Joan seated as on a throne within the sacred recesses of the Privy Council chamber of the Universe, for he knew as much about such things as a French grocer in the provinces knows of the *Lord Maire de Londres*, and the Lady Joan's magnificent confidences had dazzled him too much to much enlighten him.

Exaggeration aside, she had very great connections and relationships, and never forgot or let anybody else forget that she had them. When a cousin of high degree came near she proclaimed the fact as loudly and loyally as heralds in days of old shouted the titles and tidings of a new king, and these mighty personages did her unwittingly yeoman's service.

They were her cork buoys on the yeasty seas

of European society. Big people liked her because she took such infinite trouble to please them, and little people liked her because she could bring them in contact with the big people.

Both big and little people always apologised to one another for knowing her; everyone excused their own especial countenance on some especial plea in their own especial society. But as she never knew this it did not affect her comfort; indeed, Lady Joan was of that happy disposition which could ignore all enmity and accept all slights unmoved; and if she knew some one had been abusing her would meet the offender with such a smile, and such an emphatic cordiality, that she was the best Christian that ever, being buffeted on one cheek, turned graciously the other.

It was thoroughly sound policy.

Proud women, and sensitive women, take hints and resent rebuffs, and so exile themselves from the world prematurely and haughtily. They abdicate, the moment they see that any desire their discrowning. But Lady Joan was not troubled with this kind of delicacy. Abdication

is grand, no doubt. But possession is more profitable. 'A well-bred dog does not wait to be kicked out,' says the old see-saw. But the well-bred dog thereby turns himself into the cold and leaves the crumbs from under the table to some other dog with less good-breeding and more worldly wisdom. The sensible thing to do is to stay wherever you like best to be; stay there with tooth and claw ready and a stout hide on which cudgels break. People, after all, soon get tired of kicking a dog that never will go.

High-breeding was admirable in days when the world itself was high-bred. But those days are over. The world takes high-breeding now as only a form of insolence.

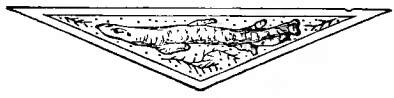
Lady Joan saw this, and never troubled the world with it.

'The old cat slangs me like a pickpocket,' she would say of some dowager-countess who did not return her card. But when she met the dowager-countess she would say, 'Ah, dearest Lady Blank! Where *are* you staying? I am *so* sorry I have seen *so* little of you. You'll come and dine with us? What night, now? Do fix a night—pray do.'

And nine times out of ten the Lady Blanks would relent and leave a card, and even go and eat a dinner at the Casa Challoner. For the Casa Challoner dinners were good, and the Casa Challoner understood the axiom that it is not what comes out of your own mouth, but what you put into other people's, that makes your friends or enemies. Besides, 'you can't cut a woman who won't know when she's cut,' said a Lady Blank once:—Lady Joan had this most useful ignorance.

So on the whole she managed to enjoy life in Europe as in the East. There were always times when she could 'throw her cap over the mill' and dance the Carmagnole, if there were also many seasons that she had to put on her meeting-house clothes and curtsy to Mrs. Grundy.

And besides, be the season what it would, there was always—Fiordelisa.



CHAPTER VIII.

On the morrow the Prince Ioris, faithful to his word, went as noon chimed from all the bells of Rome to the Hôtel de Russie and inquired for the Comtesse d'Avesnes. But he learned that she had already gone out, alone; had been out since sunrise. He left his card and turned his steps along the Corso to the Casa Challoner. He was a good deal disappointed and a little irritated—more irritated than was reasonable.

'How late you are, Io! I told you ten o'clock,' said the Lady Joan, in high wrath.

She was ready-dressed for the streets, with her hat set well over her black brows, and her person muffled in sealskin. Her friend noticed

for the first time that her skirts were too short, and her boots were ill-made, and her eyes were green in the sunlight.

He pressed both her hands in his own and dropped on one knee before her sofa.

'You must forgive me. My head ached, and I had many letters to see to and answer.'

'I thought you were gone to Etoile. You talked of it,' said the Lady Joan, with an angry suspicion flashing in her eyes.

'Etoile! Cara mia, what living woman could keep me away one second from here?'

Kneeling still on the tigerskin before her, his lips caressed her with more softness than the words.

'Don't be a goose, Io; we're past all that—at least so early in the morning,' said the Lady Joan. But she smiled as she pushed him away, and was well pleased that he should be what she called a goose. Had he not been thus a goose, darkest wrath would have gathered on her stormy brows.

'Let's get off, though,' she said, disengaging herself, but sweeping his hair off his forehead

with a rough caress as she rose. 'We're so late as it is, and I'm awfully afraid that the dealer from Paris will have got those little pictures of Cecchino's—the boy's beginning to know his value and ask a price.'

Ioris loaded himself with her wraps, her umbrella, and her little dog, and followed her down the stairs to the *fiacre*.

When she did not take his ponies out she drove in a hack carriage. Not to keep a carriage was an economy on which she prided herself.

'A carriage is only ostentation—snobs want one: I don't,' she would say in her blunt, pleasant manner. 'I always tell Mr. Challoner I like my own legs; and when they're tired there's always a cab; cabs are so cheap.'

And so, indeed, they were, since Ioris always paid for them.

The hired carriage started off, Mr. Challoner regarding its departure placidly from a window, for his friendship and his faith were both strong, and the wheels rattled noisily up and down the hilly streets of Rome.

'What did you think of Etoile?' she asked

Ioris as they drove. Etoile was very much in her own thoughts.

'She does not please me particularly,' he answered carelessly as he lighted a cigar.

'Do you think her attractive?'

'No, not at all.'

'We must see a good deal of her. Voightel recommends her to me so strongly.'

Her friend shrugged his shoulders.

'Why do you do that? Will she bore you?'

'I think her manner insolent. She seems to see no one. She is *nonchalante*: she is indifferent. I should think her cold.'

'She must warm for you, Io!' said Lady Joan, with a gleam of anxiety and irony in her eyes.

'Oh! *Dieu m'en garde!*'

It was said with so genuine an emphasis, and so careless and gay a laugh, that Lady Joan was quite satisfied as she ascended and descended scores of dark, foul-smelling stairways, her friend behind her, into the garrets of the young painters. The Challoners were well-known

patrons of young painters, and especially given to such patronage when those studious lads had a talent for making new canvases look like old.

The Lady Joan adored art: she told everybody so. She passed half her present life striding in and out of ateliers, and petting painters, and buying canvases; the cheaper she bought them the better was she pleased, for of course the Challoner purse could not afford a large purchase except now and then on speculation.

The old masters, fortunately for the Challoner purse, were so bounteously thoughtful of those who would come after them (and sell them) that they all had their schools. Now, 'Scuola di Perugino,' 'Scuola di Tiziano,' sounds almost as imposing as Perugino and Tiziano alone; and, what is still more advantageous, these schools have been prolonged into the present day, and have many disciples hard at work still in the various styles, on impasto and *chiaroscuro* with varnish and smoke, in many attics and cellars of Florence, Naples, and Rome. To these young disciples the Lady Joan was a goddess; and if they grumbled now and then at her prices, that

was but youth's idle ingratitude, Minerva was not worse than a dealer; whilst away in Great Britain acres on acres of new plaster walls bloomed with fair Madonnas and glowed with fierce martyrdoms; and Shoddy, that had built the walls, was satisfied and triumphant. So much joy can one clever woman diffuse.

The young painters did, indeed, say savage things of these kind patrons of theirs in moments of confidence, when together over maccaroni and wines in an *osteria* outside the gates. But this was only the ingratitude of the artistic nature, which, it is well known, always does turn against its best benefactors. And when one was born a Perth-Douglas, and has been obliged to marry a Mr. Challoner, and has never had as much money as one wanted for anything, it would be hard indeed if one might not enjoy such innocent compensations as may lie for one in the fine arts.

Most people (except artists) carried off the impression that Lady Joan knew a good deal about art. She had a bright, firm, imposing way of declaring her opinions infallible that went far

towards making others believe them so. She knew that in this Age of Advertisement modesty is your ruin; what one has does not matter much, it is by what one seems to have that one rises or falls nowadays.

Connoisseurs and scholars found Lady Joan appallingly ignorant, and looked at each other helplessly when she swore a Byzantine crucifix was a Cellini, or a bit of Berlin *pâte dure* was Capo di Monte; when she assigned rococo jewellery to Agnès Sorel, and a panel of the Bologna Decadence to Andrea Mantegna.

But then those connoisseurs and scholars are not all the world, and Lady Joan addressed herself to that much larger body—the great majority of the uneducated. Indeed, perhaps nobody can comprehend how utterly uneducated it is possible to be, who has not lived entirely with the educated classes.

Before the mass of idle people, moneyed people, ladies of fashion, and princes of shoddy, she found an audience credulous of her assertions and uncritical of her pretensions, and very easily dazzled and bewildered with a little talk about

schools and tones; about early painters whom they did not like to avow they had never heard of; about Frankenthal, which they vaguely mixed up with Frankenstein; about Marc Antonios, which they confused with Marc Antony; about Nankin, which they thought was a stuff, and found was a china; of Rose Dubarry, which they fancied somehow was something immoral; of Certosina, which they had an idea must mean something monastic; and of Bramante, which rhymed with Rozinante, and must be Spanish, they felt sure.

To rely on the general ignorance of mankind is usually safe, and Lady Joan did so rely not in vain. She was often found out in her blunders, indeed, and often laughed at; but then, as she was a gentlewoman, and not a tradesman, nobody ever told her, and people only laughed behind her back. That she could by any possibility ever be laughed at, never entered her own imagination.

This morning she raced up and down innumerable stairs, and in and out innumerable workshops of painters and sculptors and wood

carvers, her hat well pulled down over her broad black brows, and her friend labouring under her wraps behind her. She cheapened everything she saw; made a million mistakes, which her friend softly corrected *sotto voce*; sat down astride before the easels, smoked the artists' cigars; diffused generally a sense of her own enormou influence with the English press and the English purchasers; bought a good deal of canvas and terra-cotta at dealers' prices; wearied her companion and bullied him, slapped students on the shoulders and rallied them with boisterous good fellowship; enjoyed herself exceedingly, and then, as the clock struck one in a neighbouring church-tower, 'pulled herself together' and recollected her social duties.

'Come to luncheon, Io,' she said, after the last studio, flinging away her last cigar-end. 'Yes, you'd better come. It's the Bishop of Melita and roast mutton. Oh, yes, a horrid bore; but you'd better come. If the Bishop lunch with *you*, it'll shut 'em up for a twelve-month.'

Who were to be 'shut up' she did not

explain, but her companion understood that the indefinite expression alluded to Mrs. Grundy and her myriad mouths.

'*Qui est Madame Gründée, ma chère?*' the Prince Ioris had asked in surprise on first hearing of this mighty dame; but he never asked now; he had learned that Madame Gründée was the Bona Dea of the Lady Joan.

'My dear Io! you don't know Mrs. Grundy!' Lady Joan would retort, when he wondered to see the cigars banished, the laugh hushed, the propriety donned, the domestic scene set, and Mr. Challoner taken about in the stead of himself, when the mighty Northerners came down with all pomp into Rome. She herself did know Mrs. Grundy; had felt that lady's buffets, and knew the power of that lady's smile. She was aware that Mrs. Grundy represented money, dinners, court balls, embassy receptions, and all the rest of the advantages of society, and in her heart of hearts, though she would boast otherwise, was afraid of Mrs. Grundy—sorely afraid sometimes.

There is no such coward as the woman who

toadies society because she has outraged society. The bully is never brave.

'Oignez vilain il vous poindra: poignez vilain il vous oindra,' is as true of the braggart's soul still, as it used to be in the old days of Froissart, when the proverb was coined.

Lady Joan was a bully by nature, and gave way to her nature without scruple or pity; but she knew that society was a bigger bully than herself, and did homage to it in the dust accordingly.

On this occasion Prince Ioris shuddered at the idea of cooked sheep as even one of his own peasants would have done; and an English bishop was to him a nondescript animal of appalling and inexplicable anatomy; but he was well used to surrendering his own will, and accompanied his hostess submissively to her house, where he brushed the dust off himself and washed his hands in Mr. Challoner's own sanctum in that amicable community of goods which characterised his and that gentleman's friendship.

The Lady Joan carefully deodorised herself of all traces of cigar-smoke, brushed back her

hair, and, sitting down for ten minutes by her dressing-room fire, glanced hurriedly through an article in the *Contemporary Review* on the dispute between Valentinian and Damasus in the days of the Early Church; then, telling Ioris to come in five minutes after her, as if he came through the hall-door, went herself ready primed in all the proprieties to receive the Anglican Bishop of Melita and his wife to the roast loin of thoroughly domestic mutton.

The Anglican Bishop of Melita was a spare, solemn, scholarly person, who had been head of a House in Cambridge in his time. His wife was a no less solemn but much stouter personage, who had been the daughter of a dean, and was the niece, sister, and sister-in-law of quite countless canons, rectors, and pastors of all kinds. They had been presented to the Challoners two days before; and Mr. Challoner, who could bring up heavy artillery when required not unsuccessfully, had immediately engaged them for luncheon at once and a dinner at eight days' notice.

Mr. Challoner's own recollections of the island of Melita were not agreeable ones; but

for that very reason he desired that all the world should behold how intimate he was with the Bishop of that valuable English possession. It was, indeed, by attention to such trifles as these that Mr. Challoner had succeeded in burying from the eyes of his wife's world all the uncomfortable little secrets that Melita had known of him and his. In this matter he and the Lady Joan were almost of accord. Whatever else they disagreed about (and they did disagree about nearly everything), they always agreed that it was absolutely necessary to muzzle Madame Gründée. Madame Gründée is the one deity that English Society recognises—indeed, the only one that makes it go to church at all.

Lady Joan, a bold woman, grinned and grimaced at the goddess in the privacy of her life; but, being a wise woman, she did decorous worship to the goddess in the sight of others. She snapped her fingers at her Bona Dea behind her back; but she took care to bow with the rest in front of the altars.

This is the true wisdom of a woman. A poet's brain leaks through dreams, and is too

big to hold such knowledge; but brains like the Lady Joan's are long and close and narrow, and shrewdly contain it.

Lady Joan thought that only a fool never hedged.

She liked her pleasures certainly, but she liked still better a good balance of many figures at Torlonia's. Illness might come, disfigurement might come, accident might come; age certainly would come. In those events lovers grow scarce, but the cosy swansdowns and sables of society and a safe income will console for their absence. We weaker mortals may find an infinite sadness in the picture of Sophie Arnould, once the Goddess of Love of all Paris, sweeping in her trembling old age the snow away from her miserable door; Sophie Arnould, once the lovely, the incomparable, the twin sister of the Graces, muttering, with the wind whistling round her withered limbs, of the dead days when all the Beau Siècle raved of the beauty of those feet and ankles; but the Lady Joan would only have laughed and said, 'Old ass! she should have laid by her golden eggs while she got 'em.' Lady

Joan felt that she herself would never derive any consolation for being the subject of other people's tears; she meant to live and die comfortably, and never sweep the streets for other people: so she hedged.

Luckily for herself Lady Joan had as many manners as there are changes in a child's box of metamorphoses. Now and then, indeed, she overdid her part. Now and then she danced the Carmagnole, as one may say, by mistake, in her meeting-house clothes, or grinned when she should have pulled a long face. But on the whole she trimmed her candle cleverly, whether it had to be burned before the altar of the British Bona Dea, or whether it might flare as it liked amongst the dancing tapers of joyous Giovedì Grasso.

On such occasions as this luncheon the Casa Challoner was a temple of family felicity; it had Bass's beer and household harmony; it had the *Times* on the table, and said 'my love' every five minutes; it had plain English cooking and simple English affections; it talked politics from English points of view and sighed that its

general health compelled it to be out of dear old England so much.

Indeed, if only Mr. Challoner could have managed to look a little less wooden, and Lady Joan would not now and then have put her tongue in her cheek and grinned with an 'aside' to her friend, the whole thing would have been perfect; even as it was it was masterly, especially when Mr. Challoner explained, under his breath: 'a great friend of ours—poor fellow, his affairs were very involved—estate going to rack and ruin. I think we have helped him—yes, I may say we have helped him;' and when the Lady Joan, at the top of her table, sighed as she spoke of her beloved and lamented mother, talked a great deal—'so openly; oh, so openly!' as her guests said afterwards, 'there could be nothing in it!'—of Fiordelisa and of its owner, who was like a brother to her and her husband, and made effective tableaux of maternal devotion with her little daughter, Effie, who was twelve years old and very timid and shy, but who contributed not a little to the effect of the entertainment, especially when, with Lady Joan's arm

round her, the little girl called the Prince Ioris —'Io.'

'An excellent creature, let them say what they like,' thought the Bishop's wife, whose *côté faible* was motherly excellence.

'A very charming woman,' thought the Bishop, while the Lady Joan listened, with her eyes brightly shining in most eager interest, to his account of his new system for the religious supervision of ships' crews, and displayed her thorough comprehension of his recent article in the *Contemporary Review.*

Luncheon over, she carried off the Bishop and his wife and Mr. Challoner in a landau from a livery stable, and drove them about on to the Pincio, and up and down the Corso, in the sight of the city, which was in itself sufficient to silence slanderous tongues for a twelvemonth; and, bowing to her friends in the streets, with the shovel-hat in the front seat before her, felt she could go to as many masked balls as ever she liked with impunity.

Then she went to tea with the Bishop and his wife at their rooms in the Piazza di Spagna,

and met many English dignitaries and dowagers, and many demure spinsters, to whom she talked of all her great Scotch cousins, and told them the dear Hebrides had taken Villa Adriana, outside Porta Pia, and offered her assistance in a lottery for the building of another Protestant church within the gates, for which they were petitioning the Government. After that, having bored herself to death with estimable energy and endurance (for the root of her success lay in never showing that she was wearied), she justly thought she had earned her rest and recreation, and told her husband to go home without her, which he did obediently, and she lay back in her landau on the cushions so lately ecclesiastically sanctified, and laughed till she cried, and lighted a dozen cigarettes, and called for Ioris at his own house, and had a gay little dinner with him and three or four pets of hers, who accompanied her afterwards to the Capranica Theatre, and saw one of the wittiest and least decorous of the popular comedies, and amused herself vastly, and went homeward singing snatches of airs in chorus, and so upstairs into the Turkish room, where she sang

more songs, with the guitar on her knee, and drank black coffee, and smoked, till the room was one dun-coloured cloud such as was wont to hide from mortal eyes the tender hours of Jupiter.

Thus did she make her grave bow in the face of her Bona Dea and dance her mirthful capers behind her, in one and the same day, and make the best of both worlds and smoke her cigar at both ends.

CHAPTER IX.

It was four by the clock when Ioris found himself free to walk home across the intense blackness and the brilliant whiteness of Roman shadows and Roman moonlight.

He drew his sables about him with a low sigh of relief as the porter closed the door behind him; he looked up at the stars, lighted a cigar, and paced homeward thoughtfully.

He was so used to it all that he had ceased to think about it, but this night it had bored him: the songs heard five hundred times, the furtive glances that told so old a story to him, the jests, the inquiries, the insistant passion—it was all so tiresome, and he was glad to get

away from it and be by himself quiet in the mild moonlit winter's night.

To Ioris, Nature had been kind, and Chance had been cruel.

He was tall and slender of form, with a delicate dark head, and a look of thoughtful and reticent calm which would have made the white monastic robes of a Dominican or the jewelled costume of a Louis Quinze courtier suit him better than the dress of the world that he wore. People looked at him far oftener than they did at still handsomer men.

It was one of those faces which suggest the romance of fate, and his eyes under their straight classic brows and their drooping lids could gaze at women with a dreaming amorous meaning that would pour trouble into the purest virgin soul.

Women never saw him for the first time without thinking of him when he had passed from sight. He had the charm of arousing at a first glance that vague speculative interest which once felt so easily grows little by little into love. Ioris was a man whom women always loved when he wished them to do so.

He was a Roman and a patrician: the purest blood and the most ancient lineage were his; they were all that remained to him of the vanished greatness of a race which had been second to none through a thousand centuries for valour, power, and all noble repute; he had fought, he had travelled, he had studied; he had the taste of an artist and the manner of a courtier; he looked like a picture, and he moved like a king. He had an old estate and an income slender in comparison with his rank, but sufficient for his habits, which, though elegant, still were simple. He loved his country and his dependents, and was happy in the life of an Italian noble, which is, perhaps, as lovely a life as there is to be led in this world. Alas! in an evil hour of his destiny the bold eyes of a new-comer, roving over the crowds of a Court ball, had fallen on him, and his last hour of peace had then struck.

When the Lady Joan first arrived from the East, life seemed to her grown very dull. It was before the season had begun; the air was heavy, the streets empty; she missed the red burning skies, she missed the fast desert scampers, she

missed the noisy bazaars, she missed the camping out; she felt dull and depressed: the men around had not yet become her brothers; she was in that mood which, when an Englishman is in it, makes men of other nationalities say of him 'that he wants something to kill.' Lady Joan wanted something to kill, and she found it.

At various balls when the season came on she noticed a man who did not notice her. There was something in his slender grace and his delicate face, in his unrevealing eyes, in his cold glance, which fascinated her. What fascinated her much more was, that though when he bowed to other women his eyes were amorously soft and his laughter light and gay, his gaze if it chanced to light on her was chill and indifferent, and at all times he avoided her. In vain did she drift near him constantly, cast countless glances after him, waltz furiously past him, and flirt with his best friends; he took no notice of her, and seemed rather repelled than attracted. One evening she who was not easily baffled insisted that he should be presented to her. He tried to avoid his fate, but it was written; a friend, who cared more

to please the imperious and handsome stranger from the banks of the Euphrates than to please him, entrapped him; escape was no longer possible without looking like a boor. He was brought, bitterly against his will, to her side: he was called Ireneo, Prince Ioris.

'She makes one think of a snake,' he thought. Some fancies of the Nile had entangled themselves with this new acquaintance in his mind. She was everything that he disliked in woman; her voice seemed harsh to him, her gestures rough, her attitudes masculine, her look unfeminine. She had none of the soft charms of womanhood; she danced ill, she dressed ill; she was distasteful to him: she saw all that well enough, but she resolved to avenge it.

She bade him call on her: he could do no less. When he entered she seemed not to hear; her head was resting on her hands; she turned surprised and embarrassed; there were tears in her eyes; she spoke vaguely and hurriedly of *quelques amertumes*; she hinted a *vie incomprise*; she let fall a murmur of a *mariage mal assorti.*

It startled him.

To be astonished is in a sense to be interested.

This woman, who waltzed so madly, rode so recklessly, and looked like a young black-browed *bersagliere*, was not happy at heart—had a brutal husband—sighed restlessly for a happiness she had never known—concealed weariness and bitterness under the mask of a defiant courage and gaiety!

The strange contrast of it arrested his attention, and she appeared to place confidence in him—a stranger who had for six months persistently avoided her—in a manner which perplexed as much as insensibly it flattered him. Men are always inclined to be pitiful to the woes of a woman when they are not woes which they themselves have caused. They will stone away without mercy a woman whom they themselves have wounded, but for the victim of another man they are quick to be moved to tenderness and indignation.

The Lady Joan, knowing this, having in vain tried all other sorceries, took her attitude as a

victim. Whenever she found anyone whom she thought would believe it, she always became the victim of Mr. Challoner and of the rapacity of her family, which had sacrificed her to a Brute because he was a Crœsus. To be sure the riches were all left behind in the sands of Abana and Pharphar, and the brute was the most well-trained and patiently-enduring of *maris complaisants*; but at this time the Brute was absent in London, and her listener had never seen him, and of Crœsus he was not incredulous, because an Englishman is always supposed to be one, and on the Continent is given an unlimited credit on account of that supposition, of which he seldom fails to avail himself.

When Ioris left her presence that day she had gained her point with him so far that, although she still half-repelled, she had begun to startle and interest, him, his thoughts were busy with her—a woman need ask no more. As for herself, the Lady Joan's pulses stirred as they had not done for many a day; the dulness and apathy that she had felt passed off her like a vapour; she had wanted something to kill, and

she scented prey. Besides which she was already in love.

Her spirits rose at once; she rang and ordered her horse. She rode with great courage and skill; she flashed past Ioris like a meteor out of the gates to the open country. As he bowed to her in the sunset he mused to himself:

'Why did she confide in me?'

Reason and vanity both could give him but one answer.

There was a woman at that time who loved him well, and whom he had loved well also—a countrywoman of his own. As he went to her, that night, he thought of those new strange darkling brows; as he sat with her, she—whose stars and sun and heaven and earth he was—felt that his attention wandered and that his mind was absent.

When a woman like the Lady Joan is in love, escape for him with whom she is in love is not easy.

'She has the stride of a carabineer, the feet of a contadina, the teeth of a gipsy, the eyes of a tigress, the manners of a fishwoman,' he told

himself: and thought so; and yet, do what he would, he could not forget the strange glitter of those eyes; he could not forget how he had seen this self-willed, daring, sun-browned rider from the Syrian Desert melted to tears and wooing his sympathy with hesitating words of confidence.

The very strangeness of the contrast heightened its enigma for him.

Long rides in the rosy summer hours, with the wind blowing over the flower-filled grasses; early mornings, when he carried her knapsack for her in breezy pilgrimages to forest sanctuaries or mountain heights; lonely evenings, when the guitar was got out and the people's ritornelli tried over to his teaching, with gay laughter and amorous gaze to suit the words; late nights, when the Turkish tobacco was smoked, and the Roman songs sung, and the Persian sequins glittered in the lamp-light on her dusky braids, and the shining fierce eyes glistened with fervid invitation and flashed with eloquent meaning—one by one these succeeded each other with feverish rapidity until their work was done, and he was whirled into a fancy as sensual as her own,

if not as durable, and lost himself in it for a brief while, and woke to find the chains fast-locked about him and his place assigned to him for good and aye in the triangle of the Casa Challoner.

Of course gradually he became aware that the Crœsus was a gentleman not too well off, and very fond of speculating in whatever chanced to come in his way, from railway companies to Capo di Monte cups, and that the Brute was a person who would dine with him every evening and be shrouded amicably behind a newspaper after dinner; who would grumble and quarrel certainly about the soup or the salt or the servants, but who would never by any chance ask him if he had a preference for pistols or swords.

Of course little by little he became aware that a good many fictions had been spread out for his attraction, and that if anyone were a victim in the household it certainly was not the Lady Joan. Little by little he saw all this byplay and all the shifts and straits with which the Casa Challoner was kept straight in the world's eyes; and he grew so used to the inventiveness of his

mistress that when she did chance to speak the truth he never believed her. But to all this knowledge he only came by such slow degrees that he grew used to it as it stole upon him; and in her passion for him he could not choose but believe—it was too jealous, too violent, too exacting, too terribly ever-present with him, for him to have a chance of doubting its vitality and reality.

There were times when his own exhausted passion roused itself, with infinite effort and with a weariness that was almost repugnance, to respond to the unending insistance and undying fires of hers.

A woman who is ice to his fire, is less pain to a man than the woman who is fire to his ice. There is hope for him in the one, but only a dreary despair in the other. The ardours that intoxicate him in the first summer of his passion serve but to dull and chill him in the later time.

Ioris, in certain passing moods, would think almost with a shudder, 'Heavens! will she insist on these transports for ever?'

This evening, walking homeward, he felt tired

of the day, tired of the evening. He had had so many like them.

He knew the songs by heart and the smiles too. The routine of the hours, so carefully balanced between the decorum that imposed on the little world she studied, and the amusement and abandonment that were the real delights of her nature, seemed to him wearisome and vapid. It was always the same thing. She could take a genuine zest in the small Tartufferies of the tea-parliament; she could take a sincere delight in the jokes of the Capranica and the jests at Spillman's. She had this supreme advantage—she loved the life she led in both its extremes. But he did not.

He had a contempt for the conventicle; he was tired of the theatre. He bore his share in both psalm and play because he had grown into the habit of doing anything that she dictated to him. But all the same he had too much good taste not to be tired of both.

He walked through the dusky shadows and across the wide white squares to his own little house on the bank of the river, down by the

Piazza del Gesù. He let himself in, took the lamp that was burning in the entrance, and went up the staircase to his own favourite chamber.

The house was cumbered with busts and bronzes, and rolls of old tapestries, and rococo bits of china and carving, and broken fragments of sculpture. For it was in a manner the warehouse of the Casa Challoner, which could itself not decorously be strewn about with more things than would look natural.

He went up to his own room and threw his coat off and lighted a cigar. It was a pretty room, looking on a garden that in spring was green with lemon and orange trees, and had an old statue or two in it, and a wide-arched loggia hung with creeping plants.

There was one portrait on the wall among landscapes and weapons and etchings, relics of the time when he had been an art-student at San Luc's and a duellist in grey old Pisa.

It was a portrait with an Egyptian profile, a classic head, a cruel jaw, and a hard mouth; he glanced up at it and turned away with a sort of restless impatience at its presence there.

Indeed, it had no place of right there—being, as it was, the portrait of another man's wife. But it was not this scruple which troubled or distracted him. It had hung there for several seasons.

What made him feel impatient of it now was, that for the first time it occurred to him, with a chill, that throughout all the days of his life he would never be able to escape from the staring watchfulness of those menacing eyes.

He was like one of those magicians of fable who, having mastered spirits of good and evil for many a year in safety, at last summons from the nether world a spirit that defies his spells to banish it again, and abides with him, to his misery, growing stronger than himself.

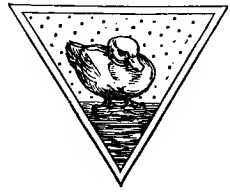
This night he turned restlessly and uneasily from the gaze of the portrait, moved his lamp so that the picture was left in darkness, and took out from his bookshelves some old numbers of a great European review. He searched through them until he found certain poems signed 'Etoile.'

He sat reading until the lamp grew dim and

the sparrows in his garden below began to twitter at the approach of dawn.

'Can it be possible that this woman has never known what love is?' he said to himself as he shut the book and went to his bed.

The morning had risen.



CHAPTER X.

'I WONDER what Voightel has told her?' thought the Lady Joan to herself on the morrow.

She felt a little uneasy: just as she had used to feel under the gaze of the great explorer's green spectacles on the housetop in Damascus, when the champagne was in the ice-pails and Mr. Challoner in his counting-house, and Voightel's little cynical, self-complaisant chuckle had sounded scarcely more welcome to her than if it had been the hiss of a cobra. She was uncomfortably conscious that Voightel knew much more of her than was agreeable to herself; besides, he was the bosom friend of that brilliant politician who had been trustee to her marriage settlements.

'I daresay she knows everything, and I'm sure she's good for nothing,' she reflected at noonday; thereupon she dressed herself in her best, took out of her wardrobe with her Astracan furs an admirable manner—frank but not free, blunt but not bold, cordial and good-natured and high-spirited—which she kept on hand for people with whom it was not necessary to don the meeting-house clothes, yet with whom it might be dangerous to dress quite *en débardeur*; and thus arrayed, with her pleasantest smile shining honestly in her grey eyes, she drove herself across the city to the old palace by the Colonna Gardens, in which the Comtesse d'Avesnes had established herself on the previous day; and finding her at home, would take no denial from Etoile, but insisted on the friend of her father and of dearest Voightel passing the rest of the day with her. It would be such a charity. She was quite alone, she said: Mr. Challoner was gone to Orbetello, and Io—poor Io—was obliged to bore himself all day at the Court with some newly-arrived foreign potentate.

'Of course she must have led the very

deuce of a life, but nobody would ever think it to look at her,' the Lady Joan reflected in perplexity as she surveyed her guest at her own breakfast-table. She was quite honest in her conviction. Given a woman with every opportunity to—amuse—herself, why, of course the woman had—amused—herself: every idiot knew that.

She did not like her guest. She could not make her out; she was irritated by her own suspicions that Voightel had told her disagreeable things; and though she liked patronising artists she did not care for artists of European celebrity when they were of her own sex, and were as proud as Lucifer, as she said angrily to herself, and looked round her rooms with eyes that seemed to her to detect at a glance the china that was mended, the canvases that were restored, the antiquities that had been made yesterday, and the certosina that had been glued together last week. Nevertheless she made herself charming; got out some really good things, which she was never without in case any real connoisseur should happen to call; and over the plump

quails, and light wines, of her breakfast-table was the very model of a clever, good-humoured, candid, and hospitable hostess.

No one could play the part better than she when she liked; and Etoile, won by her cordial good humour and bright intelligence, reflected that Voightel, when he was prejudiced could be very unjust. Great men can be so, as well as little ones, sometimes.

'Dear old Voightel!' said the Lady Joan fervently. 'I am so fond of him. People call him a cynic, but I'm sure his heart's in the right place. He was like a father to me in Damascus.'

She had hated Voightel; as a woman who loves adventures, yet wishes nobody to know that she has any, does hate a grim old ironical onlooker, with keen eyes watching through his spectacles and the raciest humour in Christendom, on whom all her prettiest fictions and sharpest devices fall harmless as feathers on bronze. But she had always met Voightel with both hands extended and the pleasantest of smiles. 'Ah, *mir zu liebe, mein Herr*!' she would always say to him with the frankest delight when they crossed

each other in any of the cities of Europe; and Voightel would go and dine with her and enjoy his dinner—as, indeed, there was no reason that he should not; for it does not matter if you think very ill things of a woman, so long as she is good-looking and makes a fuss with you.

'She would pounce on me like a tiger-cat if she dared,' Voightel would think to himself as she smiled on him and gave him mocha, Turkish fashion, and prepared with her own hands for him his water-pipe;—and it tickled his fancy so much that he was always at his pleasantest with her; so that though she knew that he did not believe in her one bit, she was quite sure that he liked her.

So runs the world away; and so, amongst all the spiders cheating all the flies, a spider makes a meal for another spider now and then.

Etoile, as she heard Voightel's praises, felt almost guilty for the guilty and absent man who had called this ardent and grateful friend of his the 'Prose of Rome.'

Before she could reply there entered the Count Mimo Burletta, plump and busy, his

mouth full of new scandals and his hands full of new laces.

'Am I in your way? Is that your tailor?' asked Etoile of her hostess, in perfect good faith, not recognising him by daylight, and only seeing the filmy heaps of the laces he carried.

Lady Joan laughed, frowned, whispered hurriedly that he was an old friend—very poor—snubbed the ill-timed visitor and his laces, and dismissed him; then, thinking better of it, ran after him into the anteroom and consoled him, and told him, with a smile, that the Comtesse d'Avesnes had taken him for a man-milliner.

'*Maladetta sia!*' swore Burletta, dropping his laces in his rage, till he looked like a large fat ram dropping its fleece. '*Maladetta sia!*'

'With all my heart!' laughed the Lady Joan, and returned to her drawing-room, taking a piece of yellow Venetian point with her as a reason for her absence in the ante-room.

'A collar of Marino Faliero's,' she said as she entered. 'Isn't it interesting? Perhaps the very one he was executed in—who knows?'

'Who knows indeed?' said Etoile, with a

smile. 'But why not say Desdemona's at once? It would be more poetic.'

The Lady Joan threw the lace aside crossly. She had a suspicion that Voightel's friend was laughing at her, and she did not like to be laughed at; moreover she preferred people who believed in Faliero, or in anything else that she might choose to tell them.

She had some odds and ends of real art and real history jumbled together in her brain like the many-coloured snips and shreds in a tailor's drawer in Spain. But they were all tumbled about pell-mell, and the wrong colours came up at the wrong time; and she had so unfortunate a preference for always dragging in the very biggest names and the very grandest events upon every occasion, that her adorer, Mimo Burletta, who really was learned in such matters, was constantly made very nervous by her blunders.

'La Challoner is beautiful, noble, chaste—a very pearl and queen of women,' he would say in his enthusiasm about her. 'But she makes one little, very little mistake—a pot baked yesterday is always a vase of Maestro Georgio's; all her

fiddles are Cremonas; all her sprigged china is Saxe, all her ugly plates are Palissy's; all her naked people are Michael Angelo's; all her tapestries are Gobelin; all her terra-cottas are Pentelic Marbles. Now, that is a mistake, you know; the world is too little for so very much treasure. She forgets that she makes her diamonds as cheap as pebbles. But she is a divine creature for all that,' would the loyal Mimo always cry in conclusion.

At this moment she looked at the lace with regret. It was very yellow, very full of holes, and not very much coarser than what the women make every day along the Riviera. Why would her guest not believe in it?

'Would you mind driving me about to-day?' she said, glancing at the clock, reflecting that she might as well get something in return for this breakfast. 'The ponies are tired. Mine?—no, they're not mine exactly: they're Io's; but of course I have them whenever I like. Yes, they're nice little beasts—little Friuli nags—fast as steam and surefooted as goats. They're very useful. Will you drive me? Thanks

Perhaps you will go with me to a few studios, if you don't mind? Of course it will bore you. You'll find it all second-rate, but to have your opinion will be such a treat to me and such an honour to them! Are you ready?'

Of course she carried her point and got into her guest's carriage and began a round of visits. She was not quite the Lady Joan of the bib-and-tucker, nor was she quite the Lady Joan of the loup-and-domino, but the same adroit mixture of the two that she had been throughout luncheon.

She was sincere, in her eager invitation; she had a genuine zest in exhibiting any celebrity in her companionship. It gave her a *cachet* of talent. She liked to affect artistic society, her family had always done so; only, where they had had all that was greatest in all Europe to choose from, she had to take such offshoots of intellectual power as she could obtain. Sculptors who thought it high art to imitate in stone, schoolboys and sucking babes, cloth trousers and silk gowns; painters who cut colour like butter and like butter spread it with a knife, then called the

mass a chord in colour or a prelude in carmine; clever writers who appraised their age aright, and saw that it needed not high purpose nor high thought, and trained their gifts accordingly, and, instead of dying like Keats or Buckle, took good incomes from great newspapers, and were not too clever for their peace or price—these and their like she would get round her, and make them useful to her in many ingenious ways.

But when a great fame came within her reach she grasped it eagerly, and always was the first to ask it out to dinner.

These pastilles of art and intellect burned in her rooms gave it a fine aroma, and she liked people to run about and say, 'I met Pietra Infernale there last night; he means to have his illustrated *Furioso* ready by New Year;' or, 'I dined at the Challoners', to see the Russian novelist, Sacha Silchikoff—wicked, if you like, but then how witty!' or, 'I lunched yesterday with Lady Joan, and met Tom Tonans: he says there is no art nowadays in the R.A.—nothing but millinery and nursery elegiacs.'

This kind of thing gave her house a smell

of the Muses and the Graces and took off any possible likeness it might otherwise have had to a *bric-à-brac* shop. Therefore, having now secured the friend of Voightel for all the remaining daylight of a fine mild afternoon, she drove up and down many streets, and went in and out many studios; smoked a cigarette here and there; and finally, at five o'clock, thought it better to wind up with a little *tableau* of respectability and begged to stop before an old dark house, in an old dark quarter.

'I must make you know my dear friends the Scrope-Stairs,' she said entreatingly. 'It's their day, and I promised I would bring you if I could. You won't mind coming, to oblige *me*? I've told them so much about you. They're such dear, good, clever people; and they're dying to see you—dying!'

With which she went through the dusky doorway and began to mount steps innumerable and very steep and dark. Etoile followed her, unwilling to seem discourteous in such a trifle, and willing to please Lord Archie's daughter when she could.

'I've told Io to meet me here. The Scrope-Stairs are so fond of him,' said the Lady Joan as she clambered up with agility to the fourth floor. 'Oh, yes—it is an awful height; but they are so very ill-off, poor dear people. Dear old Lord George managed to make ducks-and-drakes of five fortunes.'

She interrupted herself to put aside a dingy tapestry, and led the way through ill-lit passages to a large, dim, naked-looking chamber, where there were congregated in solemn congress some forty or fifty ladies of that age once described as somewhere between twenty and sixty, whose centre of attraction was a tea-table, about which they revolved as planets round a sun.

'How *do* you do, dears?' cried Lady Joan, kissing a great many of them one after another with ardent effusion. 'Is Io come? No? Oh, just like him! Ah, I beg your pardon; how careless I am! Yes, I *have* persuaded her, you see. Let me present you to my friend the Comtesse d'Avesnes. You know her best as Etoile. Allow me——'

Lady Joan saw an electric shock of amaze-

ment, a nervous thrill of curiosity mingled with terror, palpitate through all her assembled friends at the name of Etoile—such a tremor of trepidation as thrills through a dovecote when in the blue sky hovers a hawk.

She enjoyed it amazingly.

Though so careful to conciliate Mrs. Grundy she cordially detested that august personage, and loved to 'tie a cracker to her tail,' as she phrased it, whenever she could do so with impunity.

'So honoured, so enchanted, so *more* than flattered! For years you have been our idol!' murmured the youngest of the Scrope-Stair sisters in a twitter of excitement, whilst old Lord George wandered in and made his dignified old Regency bow, and put his glasses to his dim eyes and turned a pretty compliment for sake of Etoile.

'But will not people think it a little *odd* to see *her* in *our* house?' murmured the youngest sister, Marjory, a thin, eager person, with a fringe of hair above a nervous face; whilst her father occupied Etoile. Lady Joan filled her mouth with tea-cake.

'Oh, no, dear; she goes everywhere; she's hand-and-glove with Princess Vera. Of course there are very queer stories; but you know I'm never censorious. Where on earth can Io be?'

Marjory Scrope coloured; she always did so at a certain name.

'We have not seen him yet to-day,' she murmured. 'As for your friend, I am delighted. Only I thought Mrs. Middleway looked a little—a little—astonished. But you know best always, darling Joan; and anyone dear Lord Archie recommends——'

Mrs. Middleway was the wife of one of those Anglican clergymen whose flocks are all the straying Protestant sheep, black and white, who dance their cotillons, enjoy their masquerades, play their roulette, drink their pick-me-ups, propitiate heaven with their bazaars, and shriek at trumpery French plays, all over Italy in the winter-time, and of whom the Roman shepherd, or the Neapolitan beggar, or the Tuscan vinedresser, staring sullenly at them as they fly by on horseback, will generally mutter, 'Non sono Christani.'

Mrs. Middleway was a large, faded, shabby

woman, with two daughters to marry. She was extremely particular as to whom she visited, and had a very small income. She would stay at Fiordelisa in the summer, and if anyone hinted that, 'Well, yes—well, was it not rather—rather strange, you know?' Mrs. Middleway would reply, 'The dear Challoners? Oh! what a cruel censorious world we live in! As if the very openness of the friendship were not sufficient guarantee! Why, Lady Hebrides lunched there yesterday—I met her!'

But Mrs. Middleway being the soul of propriety, and having two daughters to marry, looked askance at the entrance of a celebrated person, whose name she was inclined to think synonymous with Tophet; wondered what that brown velvet gown had cost, drew herself up a little stiffer than usual, and murmured to her neighbour that that sweet Lady Joan was always so imprudently kind-hearted; Lady Joan, judging by her own noble self, never would believe there could be anything wrong anywhere.

The neighbour, who was a very solemn spinster, with blue spectacles, who had written a very

learned book upon the Privileges and Penalties of the Vestals, murmured back that society was so mixed nowadays that it was really dangerous to enter it at all; one never knew whom one might not be exposed to meeting.

'Ah, no, you may well say so. There is no line drawn,' said the clergyman's wife, with a sigh, as she broke a tea-cake. 'What *can* society be without a line?'

And she smoothed her shabby silk gown, and, good Christian though she was, could not help disliking a woman who wore brown velvet, silver-fox fur, and silk-embroidered cashmeres, and had old Mechlin lace at the hem of her skirt.

To the Countess of Hebrides such vanities were permissible; they were, like other evidences of the favouritism of Providence, not to be questioned in justice or propriety. But on only an artist!

'When one thinks how they *must* have been purchased!' she murmured to the spinster who had written the learned book on the penalties of the Vestals.

The spinster shook her head.

'Very wrong of Lady Joan to have brought her,' she said, in a severe and choleric whisper. '*Here* one always was safe.'

'Dear Lady Joan! she is so imprudent and so good-natured!' sighed Mrs. Middleway, and had her feelings further harrowed by a glimpse of the old Mechlin lace of the *balayeuse* underneath the immoral brown velvet of Etoile.

The glimpse she got of the Mechlin *balayeuse* filled her with a kind of savage pain. Real old Mechlin!—sweeping the dust! These were the kinds of things that made it at times almost hard even for a chaplain's wife to believe in a beneficent Creator.

Meanwhile Etoile, unconscious of the emotions she excited, smiled on the antiquated homage of Lord George, wondered why she had been brought to this parliament of dames, and remained as indifferent to the stare of the fifty ladies as she was to the crowd on the Pincio, or to the *monstrari digito* at all times. The millclack of tongues grew very quiet round her; the tea did not circulate briskly, the muffins were not buttered with honeyed welcome; they did

not like to talk before her; she had come from Paris, and had the reputation of a wit. Altogether she made them very uncomfortable.

'So kind of Lady Joan,' whispered the clergyman's wife. 'And so kind of the Stairs—they always *were* kindness itself—but it is a pity, because to *this* house everyone has always thought they were *quite* safe in bringing their daughters. Yes, a mistake certainly, though well meant, no doubt; but when one has young girls *can* one be too careful?'

'Delighted to have had the honour of receiving so much genius and so much brilliancy into my sad old house,' said quivering old Lord George, with a bow of Brummell's time and his hand on his heart. He was a feeble old man, but had been very handsome in his time, and still knew a woman to his taste when he saw one. Lady Joan was not to his taste: only he never dared say so in his daughters' hearing.

'So charmed to have had such an honour, and any use we can be,—and we may be allowed to call, may we not?—and pray remember our Thursdays—every Thursday till June—though

we may hardly hope that you will deign,' &c., &c., said Marjory, in her most fervent manner, her beads, and her trinkets, and her spare figure, and her little rings of hair all eager with courtesy.

Under these cordial valedictions Etoile went to her carriage wondering why she had been taken to these excellent folks.

Lady Joan's brow was stormy; it was half-past five, and her friend, the Prince Ioris, had not come.

She loved to take him there—in the first place, because it wearied him to death, and in the second because it amused her extremely to stride into that circle of 'goody-goodies,' as she termed them, with her hands in her pockets and her Prince at her heels. The incongruity of it tickled her fancy, and she knew how well it served her for all these matrons and spinsters to cry in chorus to any calumniators that she might have, 'Oh! the purest friendship! The most innocent intercourse! Why, those excellent Scrope-Stairs receive them *together*—as if they ever *would,* if there *were*,' &c., &c.

The Scrope-Stairs sisters were charmed to

have him brought there at any price; he was their one court-card, their one riband of grace and honour. The 'sex of valour' was never represented in their rooms save by some clergyman, or missionary, or unwary traveller caught in his ignorance, or on occasion by Mr. Silverly Bell, if he had any particular enemy that he desired to drown in the teapot, with Mrs. Grundy to say the *De Profundis* over the defunct.

Lord and Lady George Scrope-Stairs, with their daughters, were the chief mainstay and prop to that Temple of All the Virtues which Lady Joan had set herself to build. They were, indeed, very poor, but in compensation they were so eminently, so pre-eminently—respectable!

Not because their names were in 'Debrett' and 'Burke'—plenty of scamps are in both, who will hurt you very much if you are seen with them—but because from their fourth floor there went out an eternal odour of the very severest morality.

To have sipped of the tea from their teapot was to have been baptised with the waters of respectability for life, and to have eaten of their

muffins was to have been sealed with the seal of purity for all time. True, their teapot was terrible as the cauldron of Macbeth's weird sisters, and hissed till youth and innocence, excellence and genius and honour were all stewing, cold, drowned things, in its steam. But what of that? Mrs. Grundy does not mind a little scandal—if you will only whisper it.

Lord George had been a dandy and a beau when the century and himself were both young; he had had big fortunes and spent them all, and had lived many years in exile, a sad and broken man; shivering by his chilly stove, and tottering out when the day was fine to have a mild little joke, when his daughters were out of hearing and any chance word awoke the old memories in him, as a trumpet-call wakes the spirit in the worn-out charger waiting death wearily between the wagon's shafts.

In his own house his daughters cowed him; they were iron to him though wax to the rest of the world; taking in the world's eternal comedy those indispensable but subordinate *rôles* known in stage-talk as 'utility parts.'

They were plain, *passées*, perfidious; but the people they toadied, and the friends they flattered, rather liked them the better for this.

If anybody wanted a schoolgirl looked after, a bore taken off their hands, a disagreeable errand done, or a train met on a rainy day, there were the Scrope-Stairs to do it.

Provided you were only quite a proper person, you could always have a Scrope-Stair to do what you wanted—from ringing your bell to slandering your enemy, from pouring out your tea to escorting your coffin. Their usefulness was of an elasticity quite inexhaustible, and their ingenuity in consolatory sophisms was as great as that of the chamberlain of Marie Leczinska, who, when she longed to play cards on the day of a funeral, assured her that the game of *piquet* was deep mourning. And, considering what a comfort they were, the Scrope-Stairs were not expensive—some drives, some dinners, some visits to you in the summer, some boxes at the opera in the winter—with these trifles these treasures were secured.

Lady Joan, whose unerring eye for her own

advantage never misled her, had discerned the capabilities and the advantages of friendship with these excellent young persons when first she had wintered in Italy. She saw that they had not, like her, the power to make all men their brothers, but that they were exactly what was wanted to induce Society to let her enjoy herself with her brothers. Determined, like the spirited woman she was, to dance her Carmagnole over the conventionalities, she saw the necessity of having somebody to swear that she was only curtsying, and not dancing at all. So she instantly rushed into devoted friendship, kissed them all at every meeting, and wrote them a dozen times a week sugary little notes beginning 'Dearest darling,' and ending 'With a thousand loves.'

It was not the style that suited her best, but she could do it when it was wanted.

This effervescence had cooled down a little by this time, but it had left a valuable residuum; the froth was gone, but the wine remained.

The Scrope-Stairs had found out what her 'thousand loves' were worth, but they kept their

knowledge to themselves; and, pouring out her tea on their Thursdays, continued to kiss and be kissed.

The loyalty of the Scrope-Stairs (whom the profane jesters of Society would call the Sweep-Stairs) was quite priceless in its unutterable value to the Casa Challoner. Indeed, but for the Scope-Stair friendship Society might perhaps never have been friendly. But these young persons were so well-born, so decorous, so eminently estimable, so sternly respectable, and so stiffly irreproachable, that they really could have made Society accept even odder things than Fiordelisa, and stranger things than the Lady Joan, with her hands in her coat-pockets and her lovers behind her, striding in to a clergyman's tea-party.

They were, it is true, very jealous, very curious, very cruel, could slander viciously, toady rapaciously, and injure irreparably; but these were trifles, and were, indeed, quite lost sight of under the throng of amiable qualities which they developed for people richer than themselves. Their moral qualities were their strong point;

they were armed *cap-à-pie* in every kind of virtue; they had even charity—when they were paid very well for it.

The old folks did not very cordially join in the charity. They belonged to an old-fashioned school, and did not understand the comprehensiveness of modern friendship, which means anything anybody likes, from rapturous love to deadly hate.

But their money was spent, their daughters were formidable, their home was dreary, and so they obediently did as they were told, and the old courtier put on his faded red riband to grace Lady Joan's respectable parties, and the old wife carried her knitting-needles and lambs-wool on to the terrace at Fiordelisa; and all was as it should be, and their venerable names and persons were as towers of strength built up beside the Casa Challoner.

A bolder woman would not have cared for these things, and a sillier woman would not have known their value; but Lady Joan was not above using these trifles and turning them to good account. Even an old red riband, and a pair of

knitting-needles, she knew were not weapons to be despised in her battle of life.

Lady Joan was like that well-trained elephant which can at will root up an oak or pick up a pin; and Lady Joan knew that there are many more pins than oaks, and that a pin stamped on too hastily may lame even an elephant for life. So nothing was too small for her, wise woman that she was.

A pattern of a new pinafore for an anxious mother; a damascened scimetar lent for a *tableau vivant*; a compliment at the right minute to an ugly woman; a young baritone allowed to scream himself hoarse over her guitar; a shoddy Crœsus dazzled with the statesmen and the duchesses in her photograph-book; a frank, beaming smile in the face of a bore; a pressing invitation to a nervous nonentity; a flattering deference to a wealthy pomposity; a pretty set of conventionalities put on stiff and new like her ruffs and her cuffs; a present of fruit to folks rich enough to buy up Hesperides; a loan of the pony-carriage to people who owned great studs and rare racers in Suffolk or Norfolk; nothing wasted,

nothing thrown away, everyone conciliated, everything remembered—herein was her success. She beamed on the old folks and the rich folks, no matter how they bored her, because they were solid as bullion, bought pictures, and were the St. Peters of the gates of Society. And she beamed on the young ones and the poor ones, because who could tell what they might not turn out to be some day? The corporal's knapsack may hold the marshal's truncheon, and a little lad once trotted about with baskets of washed linen who lived to be King of Sweden. Thus she got her pæans sung in all stages of society, and broke down her oaks and picked up her pins and made her path clear, and endured an amount of ennui incalculable, and listened radiantly to platitudes interminable, and made herself as agreeable to poor little Doremi screaming his cadenza and talking of his theatrical future, as to solemn Sir Joseph, with the face of a pig and the art-knowledge of a butler, and a huge art gallery in England, smelling of paint and plaster, and requiring many framed acres of 'Guidos, Correggios, and stuff.'

Of course all this cost her trouble, unending trouble. But she kept foremost before her the final words of Candide: 'Il faut cultiver notre jardin.' She had a passion-flower in her garden, of course; but her real care and culture were her cabbages.

She enjoyed her cabbages as much as her passion-flowers.

Whether she were sending her horse at racing pace across the grass that covers the dead Etruscan cities; or waltzing at topmost speed down the vast palace ballrooms; or bargaining for old gems in dusky cellars of the Trastevere; or outwitting the Ghettos in the purchase of brocades and canopies; or smiling in the faces of haughty or witty women whom she hated; or swinging through the feathered maize to call the lazy peasants to their duties; or launching shafts of malice through her black satin vizor at the Veglione—whatever it was that she was doing she did it with zest and force, and with a reality of enjoyment that was contagious.

Here was the secret of her success. To her nothing was little.

This temper is always popular with Society. To enjoy yourself in the world, is, to the world, the prettiest of indirect compliments.

The chief offence of the poet, as of the philosopher, is that the world as it is fails to satisfy them.

Society, which is after all only a conglomerate of hosts, has the host's weakness—all its guests must smile.

The poet sighs, the philosopher yawns. Society feels that they depreciate it. Society feels more at ease without them.

To find everyone acceptable to you is to make yourself acceptable to everyone.

Hived bees get sugar because they will give back honey. All existence is a series of equivalents.

'What do you think of my dear friends?' asked Lady Joan as they drove away.

Etoile hardly knew what to say.

'No doubt they are very estimable persons,' she answered. 'But I admit, a society like that is hardly what I am used to. I counted thirty-eight ladies, very ill-dressed, who I am sure were

all muttering *Apàge Satanas*, and most of them looked in a fierce state of warfare with a world which had failed to appreciate and—to marry them.'

Lady Joan laughed.

'Oh, they're horrid old cats; I quite agree with you there. But cats scratch, you know. It's best to coax them. As for the dear Scrope-Stairs, I assure you to know them is to admire them; they are so indefatigable, so true, so charitable. I love them all so much!' she added, with an irrepressible grin on her handsome face. 'Besides, you know, women are so useful—haven't you ever found that out yet?'

'No; perhaps because I want nothing of them.'

Lady Joan decided in her own mind that Voightel *must* have told her everything. Voightel never had;—but conscience is a magic-lantern that throws distorted figures on any white blank-wall.

'I think you are wrong,' she answered aloud, with the odd candour which sometimes characterised this woman, who perhaps had been born

for better things than she had achieved. 'I think you are wrong. Nobody knows what they may want. Things hinge so horribly on accident. People who used to snub Louis Napoleon thought themselves quite safe; they were always afraid he should borrow a sovereign. I knew a man who gave him a drop of sherry out of a flask in a hunting field after he had had a heavy fall one day in Leicestershire; and twenty years afterwards that very drop of sherry got the man a concession for public works that brought him in half a million of money. There!'

'But surely he gave the sherry out of good nature, not calculation?'

'Humph! I don't know. He was not the sort of man to stop his horse to pick up a farmer. At any rate he did the civil thing, and see what he got by it. Now, that is just what I mean by being civil to women. They bore you; well, they bore me. I don't deny that. But they can do one so much good—just for a drop of sherry they can get you such a big concession.'

'You would make a good political leader,' said Etoile, with a smile.

Lady Joan was flattered; though perhaps she would not have been so much so had she seen into her companion's thoughts.

Etoile descended at her own resting-place and sent her horses home with Lady Joan, who, when out of her hearing, had them turned in the direction of the house of Ioris.

'The Prince not home yet?' she said sharply to his servant. 'Well, tell him I've been here; and tell him if he's not in at half-past seven he'll get no dinner; we shan't wait for him.'

The servant bowed humbly, and in his soul prayed heaven to send his master's *dama* an *accidente.*

Then she had herself borne again along the twilit Corso homeward, and laughed as she lay back amongst the cushions recalling the faces of the thirty-eight matrons and virgins around the sacred sun of the tea-urn.

'How scared they looked!' she thought to herself. 'Well, it may all come in useful some day.'

For Lady Joan was a long-sighted woman.

When Etoile went up her wide steps into

the great palace, pale and melancholy with Overbeck's frescoes, she saw a coat lined with furs lying on the couch of the antechamber, and in the dusk of her rooms, that were filled with the aromatic scent of the wood fires, and burning pine-cones, a slender hand was held out to her, and a soft, melodious voice said:

'Will you forgive me that I ventured to wait for you? I could not bear to be turned away a second time.'

The dark, delicate head of the Prince Ioris was seen fitfully in the gloom of the evening light.

Dinner at the Casa Challoner that night was on the table at half-past seven. The husband and wife sat down alone. Her brow was as the thunders that rest on the brow of Soracte.

At a quarter to nine Ioris entered.

'I was kept late at the Casa di Risparmio,' he explained. He endeavoured to awake their interest in that excellent institution, but vainly.

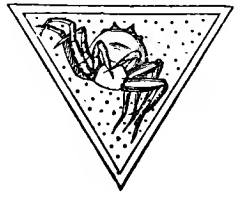
Lady Joan ordered up for him the shreds of the fish and the legs of the woodcocks. Such discipline she considered to be good for him.

Mr. Challoner grumbled over his claret that the sauce had been ruined by waiting ten minutes for nothing.

It was a silent repast, only varied by scolding from the top of the table, as a long dull day of rain may be varied by mutterings of thunder from on high. They had many such. Life, when it runs on three castors, seldom runs upon velvet.

She was of opinion with Sganarelle, that 'cinq ou six coups de bâtons entre gens qui s'aiment ne font que ragaillardir l'affection.'

But, like Sganarelle also, she always premised that the right to give the blows should be hers.



CHAPTER XI.

'You must come up to Fiordelisa,' said the Lady Joan with much urgency, a few days later.

Prince Ioris looked uneasy and ill-pleased, but added with courteous effort: 'Fiordelisa may be so happy as to interest you, perhaps, by its age and its story; its greatness has long departed.'

'What can Fiordelisa be?' thought Etoile.

The Lady Joan explained, unasked, as she drove over the Campagna. She was always explaining. Explanation is a blunder usually: whoever explains is, by self-implication, in error; but she was a mistress of the art, and found it answer with most people.

She lived in a state of perpetual apology. The meeting-house clothes were a standing apology for the cakes and ale.

It half-amused Etoile as she began to perceive it, and half-disgusted her. To a woman who was utterly indifferent to what the world said of her at any time, this struggle in another to combine self-indulgence with self-justification seemed the drollest of anomalies.

'Why not be Messalina, if it please her; or why not be St. Cecilia, if she liked it?' thought Etoile. 'But why pass her life trimming up wrong as right, in sipping brandy and declaring it is cold tea?'

But that was the mistake of a careless and contemptuous temper; Lady Joan knew better. She knew that it was much wiser to pass off your cognac as souchong, and that you may take as much brandy as ever you like, if only you can convince everybody else it is tea.

When Theodore Hook wanted to get drunk, not to scandalise the club he was in, he called for lemonade—the waiters knew what to bring him.

Lady Joan called for cold tea so loudly that she might have been heard from the banks of Tiber to her own old hunting grounds by Abana and Pharphar. Those who waited on her knew what to bring her. Meanwhile that overgrown club, Society, was quite sure it was only tea.

Society will believe anything rather than ever believe that Itself can be duped.

If you have only assurance enough to rely implicitly on this, there is hardly anything you cannot induce it to accept.

Her society, having once decided to believe that Lady Joan only drank cold tea, were ready to go to the scaffold in a body rather than admit that she even knew the colour of brandy.

Her society was limited, indeed; but then it was the club she was in—the only one that mattered to her: all her dear passers-by that wanted teacups and triptychs, and all her small gentilities and freeborn republicans that asked her to dinners and dances.

Besides, her brandy would not have tasted half so good if she had not had the fun of persuading everybody else it was tea. There is an

indescribable delightfulness to a certain order of minds in smuggling.

She now proceeded to explain elaborately: Fiordelisa was Ioris' old castle, but they lived there; it helped him a little. Io was so poor; Io was so weak; they were so fond of him—poor Io! without her eye over him and Mr. Challoner's counsel he would be ruined to-morrow. Yes, of course, it did aid him very much, their living there; and they had done no end of good to the place. Such a wretched old barn as it had been when they had gone there first of all! Nobody could imagine the trouble she took! But then when she went in for anything she always did do it thoroughly; not like Io—poor Io!—who would never have a centime off the estate if she did not get it for him. How she slaved over those silkworms, for instance! such beastly-smelling things as they were; and she scarcely stirred out of the house for three months, she had to watch them so; but then she made three hundred pounds nearly by the raw silk in the year; and only think what three hundred pounds meant to poor Io! Thus she discoursed, whipping the

ponies. She was so used to making the discourse that it ran off her tongue like her raw silk off the reels of the winder. More or less varied, according to her auditors, it did duty to a thousand listeners in the twelvemonth's time, and induced Mrs. Grundy to submit to Fiordelisa, and even sometimes to visit there.

'The place was quite poverty-stricken when we came,' she said, with a cut of the whip to the pony Pippo. 'When we knew him first he was on the brink of ruin; *we* pulled him straight. Through extravagance?—oh, no, weakness. Io's as weak as water—give his head away if he'd got nothing else to give. Just like St. Martin and his cloak. He is like a child about business, too; a baby would wind him round its finger; he can't say no. If it wasn't for *me* he'd maintain all the ague-shaking souls of the Agro Romano, I'm sure he would.'

'Is he duly grateful to you?'—Etoile, lying back in the carriage, began to pity the absent man vaguely.

Lady Joan shot a glance at her.

'Oh, I don't know,' she muttered, a little

sullenly. 'He knows he couldn't keep straight without *me*, if you mean that. We've spent a great deal on the place too; but then we've got very fond of it. I've made three new *vignas* this year; got my vines out from Portugal. I grubbed up an old garden and planted it with Xeres. I shall make sherry in three summers more.'

'And if your friend ever marry?' said Etoile, with the indifference she felt, only hazarding a natural conjecture.

The Lady Joan's eyes flashed as steel does in the rays of the sun.

'Marry!' She drew her breath and set her teeth, but in another moment she smiled.

'Ah, yes, I do so wish he would, if he married *properly*. But, you see, poor Io—well, he's very silly about *me*; thinks there's nobody like me, and all that. But it's all nonsense. I'm always telling him not to be a goose.'

'He lives in hopes of Mr. Challoner's euthanasia? And yet he lets Mr. Challoner plant his vines?'

'Bother you! How much has Voightel told

you?' thought the Lady Joan, with wrath in her soul; but she laughed and grinned pleasantly. She had a trick of grinning, but then she had very handsome teeth to show.

'Mr. Challoner *die!* My dear, he'll live for ever! I believe he was cut out of a tree of lignum-vitæ. I'm sure he looks as if he had been. By the bye, he wanted to come to-day but some telegrams came in and kept him—heaven be praised for all its mercies! We get rid of him in the summer, you know. He goes to the German baths somewhere or other with little Effie; and Effie's Swiss governess. Have you seen that Swiss girl? Horrid little upstart; I believe she came out of a *café-chantant* at Vevey. Mr. Challoner chose her. Of course Effie's taught to disobey *me*, and lie, and be rude in all kinds of ways that she can. Oh, my dear you don't know half the troubles *I* have to put up with.'

'And people think Mr. Challoner such an excellent man! I suppose you did also once?'

'I—I always thought him the most odious cad in the whole universe. I've never changed

about *that*,' responded his wife, with one of those sudden bursts of temper and truthfulness which occasionally upset all her best plans and tallest card-house of conventionalities; then, conscious of a slip of the tongue, she coloured, and was glad that Pippo took to pulling.

'Io's very unhappy about you,' she said suddenly. 'He declares you don't like him—is it true?'

'Not at all; he has beautiful manners. I think him an admirable *laquais de place*.'

Lady Joan screamed with laughter, well pleased.

'Won't I tell him that! Poor Io! I suppose you wonder to see him about our house so much; but, you see, he's very useful to us and we're useful to him, and he's all alone at home, and so——'

'I do not wonder at all.'

Lady Joan was silent. She was revolving in her mind whether it was worth while to try and impose the fiction of friendship on a woman who lived in Paris and who knew Voightel. There were persons before whom Lady Joan threw off

her meeting-house clothes and danced her Carmagnole in all the frank and boisterous abandonment natural to her. She wondered whether it would be safe to do it here. Etoile made her uneasy; she could not tell what manner of woman this great artist was.

A grave, studious, contemptuous contemplation that seemed to gaze at her from the eyes of her new acquaintance worried her, and made her feel unsafe and uncertain. Like all cowards, she was occasionally nervous. Etoile made her so. She desired to conciliate her; but she did not know how to do it. She desired to blind her, but she had a restless feeling that it would not be safe to do so.

All the weapons with which she was accustomed to fence with most people, and all the ruffs and farthingales with which she arrayed herself to please the meeting-house and Mrs. Grundy, seemed all of a sudden blunt and useless, coarse and foolish. She could not take them up and put them on with the fortunate mixture of swagger and propriety common to her.

'I wish she had never come near me,' she

thought with a useless irritation, as she turned the ponies up the rough grassy road which led to Fiordelisa on this balmy and sunny morning of earliest winter; and she said aloud:

'I sent Io up after breakfast; he'll have everything ready, unless, indeed, he's given the luncheon to the dogs and the wine to a pack of beggars—which would be very like him,' she added, with a laugh that was not easy or good-tempered, as she rattled the ponies up the sloping way between the reddening maples and the leafless vines.

Ioris came out of the wide-arched doorway to meet them as the ponies—his ponies—were pulled up before the entrance. He wore a black velvet dress; he had a broad-leafed felt hat in his hand; he had a red ribbon round his throat, and a hound at his side. He looked like an old Velasquez picture as the sun fell on his face and the depth of the shadow of the door was still behind him in the background.

'Take my furs, Io. Oh, how stupid you are!' cried the Lady Joan. 'Do you know what the Comtesse d'Avesnes says of you? She says—

(now, mind that basket!)—she says she thinks you are an admirable *laquais de place!*'

Ioris reddened under his delicate dark skin, but bowed low.

'I am glad that the Comtesse d'Avesnes can think that I have even so much small merit as that in me,' he answered, lifting eyes of soft reproach. His eyes obeyed his will and uttered what he wanted for him more eloquently than most men's tongues will do.

'M. le Prince,' said Etoile, with a smile, as she gave him her hand, 'when I see you mounted higher in the social scale, I will accredit you with it. At present—mind that basket!'

Ioris gave an impatient gesture, and Lady Joan laughed, not altogether well pleased at the imitation of her tones and her order.

'How he will hate her!' thought the Lady Joan, consoling herself with the reflection as they strolled through the house on to the terrace, with the dusky wooded hills and the heights of Rocca di Papa behind them, and, before them, beyond the now leafless vineyards and the gardens golden with orange fruit and bright with Bengal roses,

the width of the green Campagna, with the sun shining on the far yellow streak that was Tiber, and the purple cloud which they knew was Rome, dusky with her many roofs and ruins.

But for once Lady Joan was mistaken: Ioris was rather inclined to hate himself.

'Do I indeed look such a fool to her?' he thought constantly as they went through the house, showing her the various old pictures, and marbles, and tapestries, and Etruscan treasures found in the soil without. The old castle had lost much of its whilom magnificence, but it was very ancient, and had a noble and honourable melancholy in it which ill-accorded with the Lady Joan's cigar-boxes and ulsters, crewel work and caricatures, coats of new paint, and panes of crude glass; it looked profaned and disturbed, and had that air of resentment at its own profanation which ancient places do seem to wear under sacrilege, as though they were sentient things.

They lunched in the dining hall, where Lady Joan had arranged all her china, pottery, porcelain, and the rest on shelves, to be handy for

the eye and purse of that much-suffering and largely-spending class of society, 'the people passing through Rome.'

Ioris sat at the bottom of his table, but Mr. Challoner's wife sat at the top, and gave all the orders of the day, and chattered throughout the meal of her wines and her peasants, her fowls and her fruits. There was a portrait of the dead mother of Ioris on one of the walls. Etoile wondered that he left it there.

'Is Fiordelisa really yours?' she said suddenly to him when the Lady Joan had for a moment left them, her voice alone being heard from afar off in violent altercation with the henwife, who had let the last score of fowls be sold too cheap in the market.

'Fiordelisa!' he echoed in surprise. 'Yes, certainly—it has been in my family twelve centuries.'

'Mr. Challoner has a lease of it, I suppose?'

'Oh, no; I would never let it.'

'You lend it to them, then?'

'Lady Joan does me the honour to like to use it—yes.'

'And do your people like to be scolded?'

'Oh, that is nothing; they do not mind.'

'But what right has she to scold them? Because she scolds you; is that it?'

'Because she scolds everybody and everything. Some women do,' said Ioris, with a shrug of his shoulders.

Etoile smiled, and the smile made him restless. It was only amusement, but he thought it contempt.

From the other side of the tall cypress hedge the voice of Lady Joan came in strong anger, high above the cackle of poultry and the shrill outcries of the peasants. In another moment she appeared in sight, a mangled mass of feathers dangling from one hand and a hunting-whip in the other.

'Why will you let that beastly dog loose?' she said to Ioris. 'He has killed two of my best Brahmas. I bought them only last week—forty francs a pair, and such layers! I have told them if I catch him loose again I'll hang him.'

Ioris looked up with a flush on his face. 'You have never beaten Imperator *again?*'

'Haven't I?—within an inch of his life. He won't forget killing the Brahmas. What did you let him loose for? I told you he never was to be loose—great clumsy brute, breaking the plants to pieces.'

'Cara Joanna! It is impossible to keep a dog always chained.'

'Don't keep him at all, then. I shall hang him if I catch him loose, that's all. I have just told Pietro so, and he's sobbing like a baby, and Mariannina screaming!—I should think you heard them here. Break Imperator's heart? Rubbish! Break his bones, if you like. I shall if he kills my poultry. You are such an idiot, Io, about that dog.'

And she went back as she came.

'Will you forgive my leaving you a second? I must look at the dog,' said Ioris hurriedly, with the colour still in his cheeks.

'I will come and see him too,' Etoile answered him. 'But why do you let him be beaten? She can have no right to do that.'

Ioris gave one of those gestures with which an Italian says, better than by all words, that what

the gods will he must suffer, and their fiat is stronger than he.

They found the hound in his kennel, and he crept out timidly, and shivering still, with pain as with fear, and fawned upon his master. Ioris caressed him, kissed him, called him endearing words, and did his best to comfort him.

'But why not have sooner protected him?' thought Etoile, watching the mutual affection of the man and the animal, and making friends with the hound herself, whilst Ioris called to his land-steward:

'Tista, will you see to this? Take care that when the Signora is here Imperator is kept always in kennel. Of course he is to be loose at all other times; and if he kill or break anything, do you replace it, and keep it out of the accounts. I will pay you for it apart. Only take care that the Signora does not see him free, and that she never hears it if he hunts anything. You understand?'

'I understand his Excellency. But in the summer?'

'There are months before that,' said Ioris

impatiently; and, turning to Etoile, he excused himself for giving orders before her, and asked her to come round with him to see from another point of view where Rocca di Papa hung above in the fir-woods.

'Will you not let Imperator loose to come with us?' she asked.

'I could not do that. She would not like it.'

'Is the dog hers, then?'

'No, mine.'

'And you cannot do as you like with your own?'

He was silent.

'I heard all your orders to your bailiff,' she pursued. 'Forgive me; but, instead of all that complicated arrangement with him about the dog, would it not be straighter and simpler just to say to Lady Joan that you do not allow him to be beaten, and that you always wish him to be free? If she be only a guest, how can you object?'

Ioris sighed impatiently.

'Oh, that would not do with her. You

scarcely comprehend. She is so used to have her own way—I could not displease her.'

'Poor Imperator! And yet you seem fond of him.'

'Imperator only bears what I do.'

He muttered the words low, as if they escaped from him against his will, as they reached the little path that wound up into the hills amongst the myrtle-bushes, and the tufts of tramarina, and the wild growth of oleander which made the mountain-side a blaze of rose-colour in the days of June.

'What is the secret of Fiordelisa?' Etoile wondered, as the ladies of Craig Moira had wondered before her.

Fiordelisa was the Lady Joan's fee-simple of Ioris. Had he never let her within the walls of Fiordelisa, Liberty would not have outspread its wings and fled away from him.

Fiordelisa, crowning its hillside amidst cypress woods and olive groves warm in the light of the western sun, and facing the opal and amethyst lines of the mountains—Fiordelisa was the last bead of a long chaplet of noble strong-

holds once belonging to the great Princes of Ioris.

When Lady Joan had been seven months in Rome, still languid from the heats of the East, the summer in the city alarmed her. She averred that she would die of malaria, and that her lord was such a churl he would never give her the means to get a breath of fresher air.

The churl had but recently joined her, and could be represented in any colours she chose; and she, and the churl also, had breakfasted and lunched several times at that sunny solitary palace standing empty on the fair hillside, and the lust of desire for it had entered into her soul. Therefore she wept, she went into hysterics; she had even a week's fever.

Ioris laid the keys of Fiordelisa at her feet. What less could he do?

She affected reluctance; suggested danger from the wrath of the churl; but in the end relented and accepted.

It was but a dreary old place, said its master, and he sent up from the city all the modern necessities of daily life; had its mighty old

chambers swept out, the wild garden put a little in order; sent his horses up there, and welcomed the wife of Mr. Challoner to a *villeggiatura*.

Figuratively, he had put handcuffs on his own wrists.

'What a madman!' thought Mr. Challoner when he heard of the arrangement; but aloud he said merely, 'You are very good. Will it not bore you? No? I fear, indeed, my wife is not strong enough for travel. It is most unfortunate.'

For Mr. Challoner of the unchanging countenance always bore himself to Ioris as he had done to his wife's friends in the East, with the grave face and the ceremonious manner with which one Roman augur of old addressed another augur in public.

Mr. Challoner was like Mrs. Siddons: he never left off the stage face and the stage tone even if he were only buying a yard of huckaback and inquiring if it would wash.

'Go to the castle,' he said to his wife; 'go to the castle, since you wish it, but take some good girl or other with you. Mind that.'

And having thus made due provision for the

safety of appearances, he departed for the baths in Germany, leaving his wife on the hillside—to recover her health.

People all wondered at the husband's complacency. They would not have wondered if they had been able to see into his recollections. Everything is comparative. Fiordelisa, as compared with Orontes and Euphrates, Abana and Pharphar, seemed to Mr. Challoner propriety itself. He himself wondered very much at Ioris. But this is a bad compliment that husbands will always pay their wives.

Lady Joan's eyes sparkled as she crossed the threshold. Here was an occupation of territory that meant (to her far-seeing eyes at least) an annexation for life. Like Prussia and Russia, she only wanted to get her foot once across the frontier, and the soil was hers for ever and aye. Once installed in Fiordelisa, who should live, bold enough, or shrewd enough, ever to turn her out of it?

There are some women so happily constituted that they consider that for the gifts of themselves all the treasures of earth would be scarcely recompense enough.

Lady Joan was one of these.

When he surrendered Fiordelisa he had surrendered his future into her hands.

He had not known it. But she had.

To dislodge a tenant unwilling to go is at all times difficult; the tiles must be taken off ere even law can aid. But a woman like the Lady Joan would sit still, bareheaded and fast-rooted, under the open skies till the tiles were put on again, and defy heaven and earth and all their elements to move her.

Possession is nine points of the law; and with nine points it would have been odd indeed if Lady Joan should not have managed, by hook or by crook, to obtain the tenth.

Ioris, with that touch of simplicity that a man's finest astuteness is always mingled with, imagined that he only lent Fiordelisa for a summer or two, Lady Joan laughed to herself to think how easily she had drawn away this trump card from him.

'Get *me* out!' she thought to herself. 'Not when I'm once let in.'

A great statesman being once asked what was

the surest method of success, replied, 'Immoveability.'

Lady Joan understood the wisdom of the saying. When she installed herself at Fiordelisa gaily as one who only bivouacs for a midsummer picnic, she hung her cashmere upon the first peg she saw in the hall.

'There is my fee-simple for life,' she thought.

What can any man do against a woman who, long ere a hint be given her, has resolved that she never will take one?

Ioris, who thought of his country as Musset did—"*Que les soleils de Juin font l'amour passager*"—in the midsummer months looked forward to a romance bright and brief as the life of the fireflies amongst the corn; a midsummer madness befitting the months when the oleander burns on the world like fire, and the nightingales sing under flowering myrtles. But Lady Joan knew better.

The castle was ancient, honourable, majestic: like an old greybeard who has lived long enough to see his children and friends all die before him, These old places, grand with the art and

architecture of a statelier and freer time than ours, touch strangely poets, artists, thinkers—asses, as the Lady Joan would have said.

Its antiquity could not 'scare' her, nor its sanctity silence her.

She entered on its possession with the zeal of an encamping gipsy and the ruthlessness of an army of occupation.

She drew on a big pair of untanned boots, strode over the lands, marked the waste there was, and said to herself that she would soon alter all *that*. Before the summer was gone she had installed herself mistress there; before the winter had come she had taught its master that she meant to be mistress and master both. When next the springtime came round she did not consult his pleasure, or feel any necessity for hysterics; she took for granted that she should go to Fiordelisa.

She did go. This time Mr. Challoner accompanied her, and took with him some packets of English seeds and the model of a kitchen-boiler.

The family installed itself at Fiordelisa

audaciously as Tchiganes, sagaciously as Prussians. They cut walks, levelled trees, made the garden a fair imitation of the gravelled parallelograms of South Kensington, closed in the loggia with doors of coloured glass as nearly like a railway station as they could manage to make them; asked out English and Americans to dinner and breakfast, and began to interest themselves in breeding pigs and chickens.

'We've done so much for the old place!' said the Lady Joan, working a chair-cover, while her husband brought up Tegetmeier on Poultry.

'*L'audace, l'audace, toujours de l'audace,*' was her motto; and it is wonderful how very far one may manage to go by a diligent adherence to it in the world, as in war.

Five years and more had now passed by since that first midsummer day when she had gone up as an occupant to Fiordelisa, and had turned out all the old pottery, and tapestries, and artistic lumber it was full of, with the zeal and zest of a victorious trooper ransacking a wine-cellar; and by this time the Lady Joan honestly considered herself the legitimate occu-

pant of it, and would have looked on the establishment of any more lawful mistress there as an invasion of her rights as grave as an Irish peasant regards a writ of evictment to be.

She had stuck her staff in the ground at Fiordelisa, and never henceforth discoursed of it but as hers. When obliged to acknowledge the fact of its master's presence and possession she would allude to 'poor Io' airily, as though he could not have afforded a dinner unless they had been there to give him one.

She set the china that she meant to sell on the shelves, spread the carpets he paid for on the floors, and then talked of how much she had done for him; invited people under his roof, and got credit for 'such hospitality'; gave away his fruits, and eggs, and flowers, and wines, and was cited as 'so generous'; and, further, amused herself throughout the spring with having out there to dine and to sleep every good-looking man who lingered in Rome and was glad to come and smoke under the stars in the old grey cortile.

Fiction is a greyhound and Truth is a snail. She set Fiction flying over the course. She had,

indeed, once ordered out from England at her own expense two peach-trees and a Berkshire pig. It was all she ever had done; but, as everybody ate a peach and tasted the ham, and heard what she had done, everybody took all the rest for granted.

'I do so love my bees, and my beasts, and my pigs, and my poultry!' she herself would echo gushingly to the goody-goodies, to whom she was careful to appear as a kind of Harriet Martineau with a model farm of four (thousand) acres that was always, sleeping or waking, upon her mind.

'I am sure, most laudable,' said the goody goodies, quite impressed with the spectacle of a person born a Perth-Douglas absorbing herself in bees, and beasts, and pigs, and poultry. Higher society, less reverent and more *débonnaire*, laughed till it cried. But, whether leaving admiration or ridicule behind her, to Fiordelisa she went when the April narcissus was in bloom. She conceived a kind of passion for the place, it was so useful to her.

That dual character in her, which Voightel had chuckled over, had full luxury of expansion

both ways at Fiordelisa; all the various and opposing passions of her nature found vent therein at Fiordelisa—she could be Cleopatra at sunset and a huckster at sunrise.

With a guitar on her knee and amorous eyes shining under the passion-flowers in the court by moonlight, one side of her temperament had its sport and play; with her skirts tucked about her knees, a memorandum-book in her hand, and a fierce vigilance in every one of her searching glances, striding through granaries, wine-cellars, and cattle-stalls; pursuing missing centimes through columns of figures, and making the bailiff wretched for a lost franc, the other side of her had its fullest and sweetest sway also.

To be sure, she never reflected that one view of her might spoil the other to the person by whose permission she was there; she never reflected that the prosaic God of Business might take Love by the shoulders and turn him out of doors.

If Antony had seen Cleopatra squabbling for a coin over a basket of fish or a basket of dates, he might probably have recovered his senses and avoided Actium.

But she did not think of this.

She had become so used to Ioris, and so certain of her dominion over him, that she had altogether ceased to preserve for him those graces of appearance which the woman who is truly wise never neglects before the man whose passion she desires to keep alive.

Familiarity breeds contempt in the lover, as in the servant.

Lady Joan's vanity made her too forgetful of one supreme truth—that the longest absence is less perilous to love than the terrible trials of incessant proximity.

She forgot that love likes to preserve its illusions, and that it will bear better all the sharpest deprivations in the world than it will the cruel tests of an unlovely and unveiled intercourse.

She had committed the greatest error of all: she had let him be disenchanted by familiarity. Passion will pardon rage, will survive absence, will forgive infidelity, will even thrive on outrage, and will often condone a crime; but when it dies of familiarity it is dead for ever and aye.

The Lady Joan in her Oriental jewellery and her Asiatic dresses was a woman for Velasquez to paint, and most men to admire, and some to sigh for with ardour and desire. But the Lady Joan with thick untanned leather boots on, hair pulled tight from her face, and a grey skirt tucked up about her legs, or astride upon a donkey in a waterproof in muddy weather, counting the artichokes and tomatoes before they went to market—Lady Joan was not a woman to adore or to portray; and Ioris, artist as Nature had made him, and lover as he was expected to be, opening his window in the lovely rosy dawn and looking down on her thus occupied, would sigh and wonder whatever he had seen—why ever he had sacrificed himself;—and so, tired, and nerveless, and discontented, and afraid to show his discontent, he would go down his staircase and into the radiant balmy morning that itself outshone all the dreams of all the poets, and would hear her delighted voice ring out, 'Seven robins and a nightingale shot before breakfast, Io! What do you think of that?' and dared not say

what he thought of it, but had to smile and praise her skill, and look at the little pretty ruffled blood-stained heap of feathers; and submit to have the hand that was black with the cartridges passed through his arm to draw him into the loggia, where the morning meal was spread; and had to take his coffee and fruit seasoned with stories of how Nannia had been caught sneaking off with a stolen cabbage, and how Pepe had been detected filling his pockets with green peas as he had weighed them; and all the while to himself watched drearily the silver threads that the light found out in his mistress's hair, and wondered why she dressed so shabbily because she was in the country, and thought how large her hand looked as it plunged amongst the strawberries, and felt vaguely that this was not the companion fitting to that old sunlit, air-swept, flower-scented loggia, with the roses round its columns, and beyond its arches the wide blue hills.

But she did not dream of this; she dug and planted, and bought and sold, and planned and bargained; she kept a sharp eye on the weights

and measures, she ran up model styes and breeding-pens; she got up at five to count the potatoes and melons, the cherries and cabbages that went to the market; she rode his horses, and ordered his bailiffs, and strode about in grey linen and big boots, and did on the whole most admirably —for herself.

No doubt if he had overheard her explaining to her English and Americans how all this was done only out of charity, to help 'poor Io,' it would all have speedily come to an end. But then he never did hear—except just what was meant for his ear.

He had an uncomfortable feeling that it was all disagreeable, and tedious, and noisy; and he prized the affection of his peasants and farmers, and their irritation under the new reign oppressed and saddened him. In his remembrance there might have been a great deal of waste, but there was a great deal of feudal affection. In other years at his annual visits there had been only smiles, laughter, music, rejoicing; now there were often rebellion, discontent, imprecations, and sullen silence.

Of course, however, she, like all other great improvers, was not to be daunted by such a trivial thing as poor folks' devotion and mere clinging to old landmarks. She brought her new brooms and swept away with them vigorously; and if the brooms caught at such old trumpery tapestries as custom, tradition, and loyalty, and pulled them down in fragments, so much the better, she thought; she cared for no old rubbish —that wouldn't sell again.

He sighed and let her sweep on.

Meanwhile Mr. Challoner was always careful to set the seal of his presence, with his flower seeds and his kitchen boilers, on the private life of Fiordelisa, and at the beginning of each summer was always to be duly met with by any passing visitors gravely contemplating his wife's poultry-pens or solemnly watering his own stove-plants, and in his pursuit of those innocent occupations would always find some occasion to say, in an abstracted manner, leaning over a model pig-stye, 'Yes, yes, we have done a good deal for the place; my wife is never so happy as when she is doing good; yes, we brought over

those Berkshires. Nothing like English breed, nothing.'

Society thought Mr. Challoner very amiable and strangely blind.

Mr. Challoner suffered neither from amiability nor blindness. He quarrelled incessantly with his wife about everything else, little and large; but he never quarrelled about Ioris.

What could a blade of steel in a wintry dawn have given Mr. Challoner of vengeance comparable to that which he smiled grimly over as he saw another man, daily and hourly, bullied, ridiculed, stormed at, ordered about, driven to account for every absent hour, and deprived of every vestige of a will of his own?

Mr. Challoner was like the Dauphin who kept the luxury of a whipping-boy.

Vengeance!—

> N'allons pas chercher à faire une querelle
> Pour un affront qui n'est que pure bagatelle!

There was no one living on earth to whom Mr. Challoner owed so much comfort as he did to

Ioris. And, indeed, he would say, with quite a cordial ring in his voice, 'Ioris? Oh, a very good fellow—the best friend we have!'

A quiet, excellent woman, who was his father's widow and no relation to him, but whom he called his 'mother,' because it is always so respectable to have a mother, would occasionally, on visiting at the Casa Challoner, observe with disquietude the Lady Joan disporting herself in a break full of masks on Giovedì Grasso, or going out shooting, with her gun, and her hessians, and her Roman nobles; and on such occasions old Mrs. Challoner would murmur to the master of the establishment, 'Puir laddie! it's a great name and a braw house to have married into, and that there's no denying; but I'm thinking, my poor Robert, that you have paid a muckle price for the gentility.'

'Joan has high spirits; it is merely high spirits,' Mr. Challoner would return with an austerity that closed the discussion.

For Mr. Challoner never told anybody what price he had paid, whether muckle or mickle. He had never given any living soul the right to

say that he was other than a most contented husband.

He had made his bargain with his eyes open, and the bargain had been that he was to keep his eyes shut. And he fulfilled it loyally.

Now and then he winced—now and then he smiled. But it was only to himself. Lady Joan, who quarrelled with him to his face, and railed at him behind his back, could not resist a sort of admiration for his impassibility. 'The creature might be cut out of wood!' she said often. Now, a wooden husband is the most convenient of all lay figures.

This winter afternoon the real master of Fiordelisa, with his guest, strolled upward by the hill-paths bordered with aloe and cactus, and shaded with cereus and cistus, towards the yet higher lands of Fiordelisa, where the stone-pines reigned alone with the tall lilac heather at their feet.

He strove to understand, to interest, and to amuse Etoile, and he succeeded. He had at command graceful thoughts and picturesque diction; he loved art, and had studied it pro-

foundly. He had been irritated because this stranger, herself eminent in the world's sight, seemed to think him a slave without power or purpose, and the unlikeness of her to any other woman that he had ever known stung him to interest and moved him to exertion.

Ioris, like many men before him, had sunk into an existence in which his mind had no share.

It was as nearly brainless as a naturally intelligent man's life can ever be.

To obey all his ruler's desires; to attend to the thousand and one trivialities that she daily imposed; to see that what she ordered was done, and what she wanted found; to follow her hither and thither; to avert the tempest of her temper by prevision of her wishes, and to be careful that his servants, his horses, his house, his patience, his presence, his endurance, his exertions were all ready to the moment that she might call on them—all this made his day one incessant and joyless routine of obedience. He woke in the morning with the dreary round before him, and he lay down at night seeing nothing better

for the morrow, or for fifty hundred other morrows, if he lived long enough to have them dawn on him. Such a life killed his intelligence. The pure impersonal efforts of the mind may be heightened by a great joy and may be deepened by a great sorrow; but a life of perpetual triviality, yet of perpetual conflict—a life, in a word, which has been condensed into the one common comprehensive word of *worry*—does so irritate and yet benumb the faculties that all intellectual effort dies out under it. It had been so with him.

Lady Joan was no fool; but she was one of those women who lower all they touch more than many fools.

No delicate thought could live under one of her loud laughs; no impersonal discussion could survive her boisterous personalities. Art itself looked ridiculous beside her pretentious patronage of it and mercenary traffic in it. And the obliquity of her mental vision seemed to communicate itself to those about her till in her presence a praying angel of Mino da Fiesole's soilless marble looked no better than a squat

bonze from a Chinese temple. As there are women who exalt all that comes in contact with them, so did she lower all things.

It was not her fault. Nature had made her so.

But the effect on the mind of Ioris had been that of smoke on painting: it had dulled all the colour and obscured all the lines.

A certain lassitude crossed by a certain irritation had grown on him; and the scholarship of his early youth, and the proficiency of art which had distinguished him at one time, had died down into silence and obscurity.

They were not needed for the wrangles of the house he frequented, and the scenes of barter that he was called upon to assist at in antiquity shops.

With Etoile they awoke. For the man who is a scholar by culture will never altogether lose delight in it, and the temper that is born with the poetic element in it will never absolutely fail to answer to the right touch. It becomes like a harp whose silver strings are covered with dust, entangled, jarred, and mute; but are still silver,

and still keep song in them when they are struck aright.

Not such a song, indeed, as when the chords first were strung, for time and wrong usage have done much to mar them; but still a song—a song sadder than tears sometimes.

The hill-paths were steep and the way long, but it seemed to have been short to them both, when at last they reached the pine-wood, where Rocca di Papa was visible. High above hung the little grey tower on the rock where Juno once stood to watch how the battle went; at least, we believe so, if we hearken to Virgil; and if we will not believe Virgil what right have we in Rome at all?

The sun was bright on the Volscian hills, and the snow on the line of the Leonessa and on the heights of the Sabine mountains glowed like an opal in the light. The low lands looked dusky and bronze-hued from clouds that hung above them, and a purple cloud shrouded the wild dark mountain of Soracte and floated midway between earth and heaven—far, far away was a glancing line that showed where the sea was beating on

the sad sands by Ostia; and aloft, white and stern as an Alp, rose Monte Gennaro, who wraps his mantle of frost around him till the maize is tall in the plains, and the girls are singing amongst the poppies. And in the centre of it all was Rome, with the cross of St. Peter's clear against the light, and all the vast cloud-world around it.

There is no view on the earth like this from one of the heights of the mountains of Rome.

Etoile looked and was silent. The great tears gathered in her eyes, but did not fall.

He watched her.

'You feel things too much,' he said softly.

She had forgotten him; and she looked up with the surprise of a sleeper awakened from a dream.

'Oh, no, I think not,' she answered him. 'I pity those to whom the world is not so beautiful as it is to me.'

'And yet there are tears in your eyes.'

'Are there? I cannot tell you—you, who have always lived here, cannot know, I think—all that one feels in looking so on Rome. One seems

to see as God sees—all the hosts of the dead arise.'

He was silent. The words moved him. He bowed his head and stood in silence, like one who will not break in upon a woman at prayer.

At that moment his name echoed shrilly on the clear air. He started and listened.

'Forgive me,' he said quickly. 'She is calling us. In a little while it will be dark.'

'Where on earth have you been?' said the Lady Joan, with her face black as a lowering thundercloud as it loomed upon them through the lines of the tall polished laurel trees. 'Where on earth have you been, Io? The idea of climbing up here! and without me! I asked for you everywhere. The coffee is cold, and we shall have it pitch-dark to drive home; and there is that young idiot's opera to-night. What could you be doing up here all this time?'

'We have consoled Imperator; and we have trodden in the steps of Juno,' Etoile made answer for him; and she looked Lady Joan straight in the eyes as she spoke.

There was something in the look of contempt

and of challenge: she herself was unconscious of it, but the other was alive to it.

'If she dare to cross me here!' thought Lady Joan; and her brow darkened in storm and her eyes glittered till they were green as an angry cat's. She was sullen and silent as they descended to the house and drank the coffee which was awaiting them in the square stone court.

Fiordelisa was the apple of her eye.

It was not, perhaps, very dignified work—squabbling with peasantry, counting potatoes and beans, ousting old folks from little territorial rights, keeping a sharp eye on the olive-presses and the wine-tubs, and hunting up the Cochin China eggs out of the straw and thatch.

But what would you?

John Vatices, Emperor here in Rome, gave his wife a costly crown of emeralds and diamonds that was bought with the proceeds of his poultry, and why should not the hens of Fiordelisa lay rings of sapphire and earrings of turquoises?

Lady Joan pulled on her thick driving-gloves

with a jerk before the coffee was fairly drunk. Ioris and Etoile were talking gaily and laughing together.

'I am sorry to hurry you,' she said coldly. 'But the moment the sun goes down the nights are so bitter. And Io has a fancy, you know, for us to hear the new opera. A boy, who lived in a dirty little poking town of the Maremma has dreamt that he is Mozart and Rossini combined, and Io devoutly believes in him. Io's geese are all swans.'

'A more amiable optimism, at any rate, than the common one which swears there are no swans at all—only a few ducks in a pond,' said Etoile, taking her coffee from him.

She smiled at him as she spoke. Almost insensibly she felt drawn into defending him against these persistent mockeries, which had so little wit or wisdom in them.

'Perhaps we *are* only ducks,' she added. 'But we are always grateful to anybody who will believe in our snowy plumage, and who will vow for us that our stagnant little pond of vanity is a lake in which the mountains of the world are

mirrored. Who is this young composer come out of the Maremma?'

'A boy of great genius,' said Ioris; 'very young—only twenty-two. He has had no education, except a year in Bologna; but he has, with many faults, many excellences. This is his first opera. It is on the theme of Persephone. Parts of it are very fine; and I think the choral renderings——'

'It is hideous rubbish,' said Lady Joan, roughly. 'Just singsong out of Verdi and Gounod, and the "infernal" part of it all borrowed wholesale out of "Lohengrin"—growl, growl, growl—bang, bang, bang—that's all. Besides, it's been done in *Orphée aux Enfers*.'

'That is not quite the same thing,' said Ioris, with an involuntary smile.

'The same story,' said Lady Joan confidently, turning to Etoile. 'The opera's stuff. But the boy happened to get hold of Io last year; and Io thinks he knows counterpoint and all that; and so he's flattered, and believes in the trash, and uses all his influence to get the opera put on the stage of the Apollo. I daresay, if the truth were

known, the dresses and things have come out of his own pocket. If he'd only a crust he'd give it to the first creature that squealed out for it. Oh, you know you would, Io, if I didn't keep you straight. Give me a cigar. No, there's no time for more coffee. See they put those grapes in; I want them for the Bishop of Melita. And they're to kill that sheep for me to-morrow. Mind Tista don't forget. And they'd better shoot a few hares and send me them with the mutton in the morning; there's that big dinner we have to-morrow, and Marjory wants one to jug for her father. And mind you tell the man to get that fence done by Monday; and if the blacksmith don't come and put the padlocks on those gates directly I won't pay him one farthing—not one farthing!'

'If I didn't see to the things *he* never would,' she explained as she took the reins of the ponies. 'He'd let people dawdle on for ever, and pay 'em just the same for doing nothing. They know I won't stand that nonsense. I've had all the gates put up and padlocked: the whole land used to lie open.'

'The people here must be very fond of you,' said Etoile.

Lady Joan did not feel the satire.

'Oh, I don't know. They ought to be. I physic 'em when they're ill. Such wry faces they pull! Of course I'm very kind to 'em all; but first of all one must make a thing pay—in Io's interests, you know.'

'And you are of opinion with Zoroaster that to reap the earth with profit is of more merit than to repeat—or win—ten thousand prayers?'

'I am rather of Plutarch's,' said Ioris, joining them, and stroking his ponies.

'Was Plutarch an ass, then?' asked the Lady Joan with supreme scorn.

'*You* would have thought him so; he could never bring himself to sell in its old age the ox which in its youth had served him faithfully. Voilà tout.'

'That is just the sort of sentimental stuff to please you. The ox would make very good beef,' retorted the Lady Joan. 'Mind! my sables are over the wheel.'

She cut the ponies sharply over their heads

with the whip and started them off full gallop down the rugged slope, leaving their master to spring up behind as best he might. The ponies were his own: spirited little cobs from Friuli, with jingling silver bells, and swinging foxes' tails hung at their ears; but no sort of possession was he allowed to enjoy of them.

'I want Grillo and Pippo to-day,' he would say of a morning; and his groom would answer, 'I am very sorry, Excellence, but the Signora has ordered them.' Ioris had to shrug his shoulders and see his ponies depart to the Casa Challoner. Why did he never rebel? He began to ask it of himself, leaning with his arms on the front seat of the carriage, looking at the profile of Etoile before him in the twilight.

'I do so wish you would come to the theatre to-night. Do change your mind. There are only the Plinlimmons at dinner—bores, I know; but we should cut it short with the Opera,' urged Lady Joan as she stopped the ponies to set her guest down in the Quirinal Square, and pressed an invitation which she knew was quite safe, since she had chanced to hear that Etoile would

pass that evening with the Princess Vera, who had 'two or three people'—*i.e.*, about two or three hundred.

'The idea of her going to Princess Vera's!' she muttered as she drove away. 'Preposterous!'

'Why that?' said Ioris, lighting a cigar, as the ponies dashed down the street of Four Fountains.

'Good gracious, Io! can you want to ask? But Princess Vera will know any artistic trash that takes her fancy—rude as she can be to every respectable person.'

And she slashed Pippo across the ears again. She herself was among the respectable persons whom the Princess Vera treated with a calm ignorance of their existence very exasperating.

The ponies rattled up the steep stones to her house; and her husband, who was just then going in at the door, stopped, aided Ioris to unload her furs, and hoped they had had a pleasant day at Fiordelisa.

'Are you disposed to let Lady Norwich

have your turquoises?' asked Mr. Challoner, ten minutes later, following his wife into the privacy of her own room.

'Yes, she may have 'em. I only bought them to sell again.'

'I thought of saying two thousand francs?'

'Yes—that won't be bad. I gave eight hundred; but then the woman was hard-up at Homburg, you remember, and glad to let 'em go cheap. I grudge 'em to that old cat. Mind, she thinks we brought 'em from Persia, and had 'em polished in Vienna.'

'You'll never do better with them: I think it is a very good price.'

'Tolerable. And they don't suit me. Blue's for blondes. Besides, they're nasty uncertain things: one never knows they won't change colour. What about the Urbino jar?'

'I got it. It is genuine. An incomparable bit. You always make horrible mistakes, but you did not blunder there. The fellow had no idea of the value of it. I bought it like a common bit of kitchen pottery.'

'Yes, I know—the man kept his sugar in it.'

'By the way, old O'Glennamaddy wants an antique altar-screen.'

'Very well. We haven't one; but Mimo shall draw one, and little Faello can carve it. It can be ready in twenty days. O'Glen is a goose—he'd take anything.'

'Yes. But people are not all geese that will go to visit him. Remember that. You had best show him good things.'

'Don't you preach. I know O'Glen as I do my alphabet. He used to give me burnt-almonds when I was a baby. I say—mind you go yourself about that little Pietà to that man in Trastevere. Io was going, but I wouldn't let him; he never beats the people down; and he talks some rubbish about the man's wife being ill with the ague—as if that had anything to do with it! That's just like Io. He bought a little plate of Gubbio ware yesterday; the woman that owned it asked him fifteen francs, and he went and gave her seventy—seventy!—just because the thing was worth it—so he said; but I believe it was only because she was crying about her landlord pressing for rent. That's just like Io

—cry a little, and his hand goes in his pocket in a second.'

Mr. Challoner smiled grimly.

His wife was very fond of airing her contempt for her friend's weaknesses before him. Not that there was the slightest occasion to do so. Mr. Challoner had left all remnants of jealousy long buried in the delta of Orontes and Euphrates, of Abana and Pharphar. And besides, there was such perfect confidence between his wife and himself that there was never any need for explanations.

'I have boundless trust in her,' he would say austerely with injured dignity if some old friend, too officious, ventured to hint that Lady Joan was a little—a little—perhaps a little too original. And, like all people who have boundless trust, he would shut his eyes when bidden.

This kind of business-conference was a closer tie between them than any the marriage-altar could forge, and at discussions of this sort they were always good friends, finding each other's views and principles often identical. Indeed, so sound were his wife's ideas about business that

Mr. Challoner could use his pet phrase with perfect veracity when speaking of her.

'You'll come to the Opera to-night?' asked the Lady Joan now.

'No—no.'

'Oh, you'd better. The Norwiches will be there, and that old cat Plinlimmon is coming with us. They'll all talk if you don't.'

'Very well,' said Mr. Challoner: he was always resigned to self-sacrifice for the public good. 'You told them at Fiordelisa that I should bring Lord Norwich up to shoot on Monday?'

'Yes. Mind, though; Norwich thinks we've bought the place. You'd better make a party and take up a cold luncheon. Echéance will go, and Plunkett, and Gualdro Malestrina, and perhaps some of the attachés would if you asked 'em, though I hate all that *Chancellerie* lot—stiff as pokers! By the bye, since we put up the trespass-boards all round, the game's in much better order. Io protests, and says the people will knife him for it some day, because they've always netted the hares and birds as they wanted

them; but that's all rubbish, I think. Anyhow, they shan't get a head of game if I can help it. There's such heaps of partridges! I shall have 'em trapped for market when we've had the pick of the shooting. I wish you'd write to England about those pigs; and tell 'em to send out some pink kidney potatoes for planting—the Early Emilys are the best. Io settled that bill for the last, and never struck the wharf-duties off it, though I told him the shipper ought to pay them; but he's always so careless about money. That's the door-bell, isn't it?—that horrid Plinlimmon woman—she's got-up like a parrot, green and red and yellow and blue, I dare say. What a nuisance it is to have to do the polite! Go in and say all sorts of things to her while I dress.'

Mr. Challoner went in, obedient, and welcomed the Plinlimmons, who were very rich people, who had made a vast fortune by a new kind of candle, warranted never to melt or to splutter, and fulfilling its warranty nobly. He apologised for his wife's tardy appearance, and quite affected the Plinlimmons, who were simple, sentimental

folks, oppressed with the extent of their own wealth and their own ignorance, by the tender manner in which he regretted his wife's imprudence in being out so late in the cold, thereby endangering her lungs and his happiness—but she was so wilful, and so fond of art, and so charitable—and she had been visiting a poor painter, who had been laid up with fever, &c., &c., &c.

From painters to painting is a natural transition, and led naturally to the sight of some landscapes which were on sale for a charity, and which the Plinlimmons fell in love with, and begged might be sent to them at the Hôtel Constantia; and so the time was whiled away until the Lady Joan entered, radiant in amber, and black lace, and Etruscan ornaments, and greeted her dearest Mrs. Plinlimmon with that cordial and honest warmth which was her greatest attraction to shy women and timid men.

Then there entered silently without announcement one whom Mr. Challoner presented to the good Monmouthshire folks aloud as 'our valued friend—the Prince Ioris,' and, with a *sotto voce*

whisper, 'A Spanish duke as well as a Roman prince—a godson of the Pope's.'

And the valued friend bowed with a calm. ceremonious grace not common in Monmouthshire, and said some courteous phrases in French, and then fell back and gazed at Mrs. Plinlimmon in her gorgeous attire with grave amazement, and murmured to himself, '*Dio mio! Dio mio!*'

'You must be very civil to 'em; they're awfully rich—made pots of money by candles,' whispered Lady Joan in his ear as she bade him fasten her bracelet.

He had learned what people who were rich meant in the Casa Challoner, and was silent.

He was ordered to give his arm to the Plinlimmon daughter, who had red hair, and was dressed in green; and he failed to comprehend a word of her French, and wished those stupid, ill-dressed islanders would not come to bore him; and felt more tired all through the dinner than he had ever done in all his life.

'How absent you are, Io!' said Lady Joan sharply as the Fiordelisa woodcocks went round.

'Ioris is thinking of Mademoiselle Etoile,'

said Mr. Challoner, with a grim smile. 'You have often heard of Mademoiselle Etoile, no doubt, Mrs. Plinlimmon?'

And they discussed Mademoiselle Etoile with asperity, as became people at whose table she had dined six nights before.

Ioris sat silent, with a flush on his face.

Lady Joan looked at him from time to time with suspicion—it was not possible that he was really thinking about anything but herself?

'What is the matter with you to-night?' she muttered roughly as she rose to go to the Opera.

Ioris shrugged his shoulders.

'Oh, *ma chère*! when you weigh me to the earth with a red-haired demoiselle, with teeth like a wild boar's and the bones of a giantess!'

Lady Joan laughed and told him to hold his tongue; they were as rich as Crœsus. Then, quite satisfied, she let him fold her cashmeres about her and take her to the carriage.

A very vain woman is always so easily lulled into contentment.

She ridiculed every note of the 'Persephone'

all the way through it, because it amused her to do so, and because she had begrudged the money he had spent in helping the boy-composer of it. But Ioris, sitting in the shadow, scarcely heard her. He was thinking of the sunset on the hill under Rocca di Papa.

He was glad when the tedious evening drew to its close and left him free.

Meantime the Plinlimmons went to their hotel, enchanted with having met a live Italian Prince, and such attention from so charming a household, and when they should depart to be in time for the assembling of Parliament (Plinlimmon being member for a borough), would tell everybody that the Casa Challoner was the most delightful house in Rome. To shy people the Lady Joan's ardent cordiality was unspeakably precious, and to ignorant people her extensive artistic allusions were unspeakably imposing; besides, she was really a Perth-Douglas. To nervous persons who have made candles such a union of rank and good-nature as she presented was altogether irresistible.

'Yes, yes; they were chosen for us by a friend

of ours, Lady Joan Challoner; she'd just got the like for her own cousin, the Countess of Hebrides,' Mrs. Plinlimmon would say before many objects of Italian art in her London reception rooms; and would feel happy and glorious in the possession alike of high art and high acquaintances. Such general felicity could a clever woman diffuse only by smiling and selling a few trifles.

The Lady Joan was catholic in her sympathies in society, and obeyed the mandate of Edward the Third to his ladyelove—

> Bid her be free and general as the sun,
> Who smiles upon the basest weed that grows
> As lovingly as on the fragrant rose.

For the Lady Joan never forgot that there are weeds by which an attentive gatherer has before this discovered a vein of gold in common soil, or found a fortune in a pool of borax.

Lady Joan knew that after all it is *l'infiniment petit* that is infinitely great.

A woman like Etoile will be blind to this. She will be touched instantly by pain; she will be moved to quick charity; she will be capable of strong deed and deep thought; she will

answer trust or appeal as a golden harp the player's touch; but the small things of life will pass by her—what is antipathetic to her she will offend by unconscious neglect, what is distasteful to her she will turn hostile by careless disdain; she will go through the world doing good where she can, cleaving to what seems to her to be truth, and seeking unwittingly only what responds to her own temperament; so the world is set thick with foes for her, as the path of the jungle with snakes.

Lady Joan was a proud woman in her own odd fashion, and it hurt her pride bitterly sometimes to do so much homage to the Infiniment Petit; but she did do it, and she secured the suffrages of all the little people who wanted to look great, of all the frogs who wanted to be bulls, of all the geese who wanted to be swans, of all the free and enlightened republicans who flew to a title as a moth to a light, of all the small gentilities who were nobodies in their own counties at home, but abroad gave themselves airs, and had quite a number of figures to their bank balance—in francs.

It hurt her pride sorely, yet she did it; and,

like everybody who is wise in his own generation, she reaped her reward in kind.

When the Norwiches dined there on the next night, Lady Joan was different in character. The Norwich people were great, solemn, stupid, and of vast influence. He was a marquis of long descent, she the daughter and sister of a duke; they were very fussy, very pompous, very proud. Lady Joan dressed herself in rigid black velvet, and only wore a string of pearls; she was very quiet, looked classic and handsome; talked of her child, showed only really good things, set Ioris at the far end of the table, and spoke, if at all, distantly of Fiordelisa as 'a place we go to in the summer. Mr. Challoner likes farming.'

For the Norwiches, and such persons as the Norwiches generally, Lady Joan was as much of a gentlewoman as she could be—nervous a little, a little abrupt, too anxious for approval, and too careful to conciliate, but otherwise quite irreproachable.

The Norwiches and such people as the Norwiches, going home, would say: 'That daughter of Archie's lives at Rome. Oh, yes, we dined

with them; oh, yes, grown a very agreeable woman too—quite quiet; a good mother, and seems to agree with that person she married very well. Oh, of course we dined there. One must always stand up for a Perth-Douglas.'

Now and then, indeed—for no human mind is so godlike that it can altogether foresee and prevent every accident — the Norwich people, or the people of whom Lord and Lady Norwich were types, were startled by coming suddenly across Lady Joan, without her bib-and-tucker, tête-à-tête with Ioris at some marble table in a Paris café, or some green bench at an open-air concert at Spa, when business had obliged her to travel, and she had mingled business with pleasure: the real Lady Joan without meeting-house clothes on; the real Lady Joan who was Cleopatra by moonlight up at Fiordelisa; the real Lady Joan who came home from masquerades at five in the morning; the real Lady Joan who sang and smoked, with a dozen men about her, half the night; and this real Lady Joan would startle the Norwiches and other decorous personages a little unpleasantly and give them a

sudden sensation as of sea-sickness. But she would whip on her bib-and-tucker very lightly and quickly, and would explain: 'I'm on my way to join Mr. Challoner, and he don't like me to travel alone; so he sent Ioris to meet me. Io only loses my money and gets the wrong labels stuck on my boxes; and of course I could travel by myself from here to San Francisco, but Mr. Challoner is always so fidgetty.'

So she would adjust bib-and-tucker before the café mirror; and the Norwiches, or the type of persons they represented, would be satisfied, and say to each other, 'You see her husband knows it; there can't be anything in it,' and so would go and see her in the winter, though they had had that awkward view of her eating her *sorbet* with the handsome Italian beside her, smoking his cigarette—a situation which would have ruined any woman of less resources and her ready invention. But in truth the Lady Joan was Protean, and slipped in and out of a dozen various skins as easily as a lizard slips out of its tail.

'Why do the great ladies go to see our

Prince's *dama*?' said many a good Roman matron of them all standing at one of the fountains in the wall to gossip with her neighbours as the carriages swept by to the Casa Challoner.

They did not understand it.

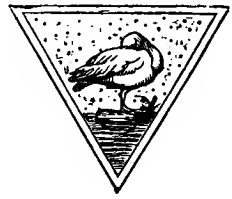
They were not aware of the golden rules of good society.

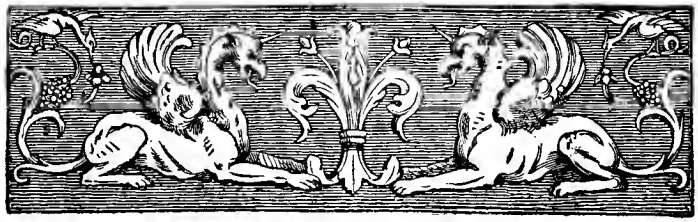
Paolotto, the baker, had a handsome wife, who betrayed him for Franco, the Swiss Guard, with the fair curls, on duty at the Pope's Palace yonder, and Paolotto's wife set out at nightfall once too often; and Paolotto following, fell upon fair Franco with a knife, and slew the Swiss ere he had time to point his halberd. That they could understand. That was Roman and righteous—just as much so as if it had been the other way, and it had been the Swiss who, by God's grace, had killed the baker. Anything, so that it was man to man, and good steel used about it.

But then they are barbarians still in old Trastevere.

If Paolotto had been trained in good society he would have only smiled on Franco of the yellow curls, and asked him to speak fair some upper

scullion, so as to get the Paolotto loaves ordered and taken for the Vatican kitchen, and so have warmed his oven if his heart were cold, and made his loaves of lighter weight, having the Papal patronage and blessing. Poor Paolotto drew his knife instead; and as he went through the streets between the Guards to pay his penalty, Lady Cardiff, who was passing by, looked at him and asked what he had done; and hearing, smiled and said, 'Vengeance is out of date, like flour, my poor fellow. We have ground bones, and Friendship.'





CHAPTER XII.

'It's lasted some years, but I don't think they can be very well suited,' said Lady Cardiff, watching through her eyeglass the forms of Ioris and Mr. Challoner's wife pass away down the vista of her own numerous rooms, after a visit of ceremony on her day. 'I don't think they can be very well suited; he looks like Romance, and she like the Money Market. The Eros he would choose would be a soft, tender god of silence and shadow; and hers is a noisy little Advertising Agent, with handbills and a paste-pot. Very bad form, by the way, to *afficher* publicly like that.'

Etoilé, who had become somewhat intimate

with this merciless speaker, and who had just then entered, reddened a little.

'You dine often with her, Lady Cardiff!'

'What a tragical tone of reproach! No, my dear Comtesse, I don't dine there often. Far from it. I find it too expensive to have to buy a pan or a platter, or some ugly *magot* or other every time after dinner—it would come cheaper at Spillman's. She amuses me though. Clever woman—knows how to suit herself to her society, and *never* knows when she has a rebuff. How useful that is!'

'Surely she never suffers one?' said Etoile. 'Everyone appears to like her.' A sentiment of loyalty to her absent old friend, and to the woman whose hand she took in friendship, moved her to a defence with which her convictions did not go.

Lady Cardiff smiled and dropped her eye-glass.

'Oh, of course people like her. She'll bore herself to death. There's no more popular quality. Besides, she has such a tower of strength in that excellent husband of hers. Of all lay figures there is none on earth so useful as a wooden husband.

You should get a wooden husband, my dear, if you want to be left in peace. It is like a comfortable slipper or your dressing-gown after a ball. It is like springs to your carriage. It is like a clever maid who never makes mistakes with your notes or comes without coughing discreetly through your dressing-room. It is like tea, cigarettes, postage-stamps, foot-warmers, eiderdown counterpanes—anything that smooths life, in fact. Young women do not think enough of this. An easy-going husband is the one indispensable comfort of life. He is like a set of sables to you. You may never want to put them on; still, if the north wind do blow—and one can never tell—how handy they are! You pop into them in a second, and no cold wind can find you out, my dear. Couldn't find you out, if your shift were in rags underneath! Without your husband's countenance, you have scenes. With scenes, you have scandal. With scandal, you come to a suit. With a suit, you most likely lose your settlements. And without your settlements, where are you in society? With a husband like that wooden creature Mr. Challoner, you are

safe. You need never think about him in any way. His mere existence suffices. He will always be at the bottom of your table and the head of your visiting-cards. That is enough. He will represent Respectability for you, without your being at the trouble to represent Respectability for yourself. Respectability is a thing of which the shadow is more agreeable than the substance. Happily for us, society only requires the shadow.'

With which Lady Cardiff, wittiest of women by heritage, as her grandmother had frightened Fox and almost awed Sydney Smith, crossed the room and lighted a fresh cigarette.

'And love,' said Etoile, 'where does that come in your arrangements?'

'Olives and sweetmeats, my love,' said Lady Cardiff. 'I am talking of soup and fish and the *rôti*—and of the man who pays for them. Young women don't think enough of the *rôti*. They fall in love with some handsome ass who makes court to them after the style of French *feuilletons*, and they believe life will be always moonlight and kisses. Once married, he spends

all their money, damns them a dozen times a day, and keeps his smiles for other houses, while ten to one he is as jealous as a Turk to boot. Moonlight and kisses are excellent in their way, but they .should come *afterwards.* They are only olives and sweetmeats. You can't dine on them. Those pretty trifles are for Paolo and Francesca, not for Mr. and Mrs. Rimini. I am very immoral? My dear Comtesse, I am only practical. An easy husband, who never asks questions or cares where your letters go—ah! you must have been married to a Lord Cardiff, as I have been, to know the blessing of *that.* With an easy husband you have all the amusement of doing wrong and all the credit of doing right.'

'In this case, indeed,' she went on, 'it is that poor Ioris who pays for the *rôti* as well as the *bonbons,* which is hardly fair. But that does not matter a bit to Society—Society will always go to dinner so long as the husband sits at the end of the table. Disgraceful? Oh, well, perhaps; but if the husband like it we have no business to say so. Of course Belisarius knew Antonina once danced in nothing but a zone, and had

always had a weakness for big biceps; but if Belisarius liked to make-believe that Antonina was a piece of ice incarnated, Byzantium was bound to make-believe so too, and to know nothing about the zone and the biceps. You do not see it? Of course not, because you are a great artist and do not trouble your head to understand Society. You live on Olympus. We are mere mortals.'

'That is severe, Lady Cardiff.'

'No, my dear. It must be a great thing to have Cloudland to resort to if Society turn one out of doors; but to poor ordinary humanity, that has no heaven beyond the card-basket, Society has a weight that you people who are poets never can be brought to comprehend. I believe that you really are all happier if your card-basket is quite empty, because nobody ever disturbs your dreams by ringing at your door-bell.'

The Marchioness of Cardiff loved to call herself an old woman. But she had kept three things of youth in her—a fair skin, a frank laugh, and a fresh heart. She was a woman of

the world to the tips of her fingers; she had had a life of storm and a life of pleasure; she turned night into day; she thought no romance worth reading save Balzac's and Fielding's; she did not mind how wicked you were if only you never were dull. She was majestic and still handsome, and looked like an empress when she put on her diamonds and sailed down a *salon*. On the other hand, she would laugh till she cried; she would do an enormity of good and always conceal it; she honoured unworldliness, when she saw it, though she regarded it as a kind of magnificent dementia; and, with all her sharpness of sight, the veriest impostor that ever whined of his misery could woo tears to her eyes and money from her purse. She always wintered in Rome, and never lived with Lord Cardiff. He and she were both people who were delightful to everybody else, but not to each other. She was a Tory of the old school and a Legitimist of the first water; she believed in Divine right, and never could see why the Reform Bill had been necessary. Nevertheless, Voltaire was her prophet, and Rochefoucauld her breviary; and though she

saw no salvation outside the *Almanach de Gotha*, her quick wit almost drove her at times near the wind of Democracy. Anomalies are always amusing, and Lady Cardiff was one of the most amusing women in Europe.

'Smoke. Why don't you smoke?' she said to Etoile. 'You make me think of Talleyrand and whist. What a miserable old age you prepare for yourself! You look grave, *ma chère* Comtesse. What are you thinking about?'

'Pardon me. I was thinking of my friend Dorotea. She is blameless, and the world is cruel to her. Yet in these women you talk of the same world makes a jest of dishonour. Why? It is unjust and capricious.'

'When was the world ever anything *but* unjust and capricious?' said Lady Cardiff. 'Still, do you mean to tell me, really honestly, *sans phrases*, that the Duchesse Santorin is faithful to that brute and spendthrift?'

'Entirely faithful; entirely blameless—yes.'

'Dear me!'

Lady Cardiff was so amazed that she walked the whole length of her room and back again.

It was late in the day, and her visitors and courtiers had all departed; she and Etoile were alone.

'It is no *use*, you know,' she said at last; 'nobody'll ever believe it.'

'Dorotea's actions are not shaped by what people believe.'

'Dear me!' said Lady Cardiff once more.

'When one gets amongst these kind of people one is all adrift,' she thought to herself. 'They have such extraordinary ideas.'

'But there was great scandal about Fédor Souroff. You can't deny that,' she said aloud.

"Count Souroff has a great and loyal love for her—yes. But he obeys her. He is in the Caucasus, trying to lose his life, and failing, of course, as all do who wish to lose it.'

'How very uncomfortable!' said Lady Cardiff. 'Then everybody was wrong, and she don't care for him?'

'That is a question I can have no right to reply to, I think.'

'You mean she *does*? Then she'll call him back from the Caucasus, my dear; and goodness

knows why she sent him there. You believe her, and I believe you, but nobody else would. *Nobody!*'

'Why not?'

'Oh, nobody, nobody! You know everybody says the worst they can now. They won't let her sing at Court in England this season.'

'And yet——'

'And yet our dear Lady Joan can go to Court. Oh, yes; and Mrs. Henry V. Clams too, and ten hundred others like them. You don't seem to understand. Your friend may have Count Souroff killed and buried in the Caucasus. It won't make any difference. Society has made up its mind.'

'And why? What has she done, except be innocent?'

'Oh, dear, dear! what *has* that to do with it?' said Lady Cardiff, vexed as by the obtuseness of a little child to understand the alphabet, and thinking to herself, 'One can't tell her it's because the woman is an artist—she's an artist herself.'

'It seems to me the main question,' said Etoile as she rose and gathered up her furs.

'That is because you live in Cloudland, as I tell you,' said Lady Cardiff. 'Who cares what Joan Challoner is or is not? She has got a well-trained husband, and we have to receive her, though we grin behind her back. Who cares what your beautiful friend is or is not? She has got a bad name, and she will be hanged for it, like the poor proverbial dog that had one. You seem to me, my dear Comtesse Etoile, to take life far too terribly seriously. To your poetic temper it is a vast romance, beautiful and terrible, like a tragedy of Æschylus. You stand amidst it entranced, like a child by the beauty and awe of a tempest. And all the while the worldly-wise, to whom the tempest is only a matter of the machineries of a theatre—of painted clouds, electric lights, and sheets of copper—the worldly-wise govern the storm as they choose and leave you in it defenceless and lonely as old Lear. To put your heart into life is the most fatal of errors; it is to give a hostage to your enemies whom you can only ransom at the price of your ruin. But what is the use of talking? To you, life will be always Alastor and

Epipsychidion, and to us, it will always be a Treatise on Whist. That's all!'

'A Treatise on Whist! No! It is something much worse. It is a Book of the Bastile, with all entered as criminal in it, who cannot be bought off by bribe or intrigue, by a rogue's stratagem or a courtezan's vice!'

Lady Cardiff laughed and wrapped the furs about her guest with a kindly touch.

'The world is only a big Harpagon, and you and such as you are Maître Jacques. "*Puisque vous l'avez voulu!*" you say,—and call him frankly to his face, "*Avare, ladre, vilain, fesse-mathieu!*" and Harpagon answers you with a big stick and cries, "*Apprenez à parler!*" Poor Maître Jacques! I never read of him without thinking what a type he is of Genius. No offence to you, my dear. He'd the wit to see he would never be pardoned for telling the truth, and yet he told it! The perfect type of genius.'

Etoile went home thoughtful, and with a vague sense of trouble upon her.

She had taken as a residence part of an old palace, entered from the Montecavallo, but with

all its great windows looking into the Rospigliosi gardens. The rooms were immense, vaulted, noble in form and proportion, with frescoes that were beautiful with the gorgeous fancies of some nameless artist of the days of the Carracci. Here she installed herself for the winter at her ease, and here she felt as if she had already dwelt for twenty years. Of one great chamber, with deep embrasured casements, she made her favourite apartment, half-studio, half-salon; and filling the embrasures with palms, and ferns, and flowers, and burning oak logs and dried rosemary on the wide hearth, and getting about her the picturesque litter of old bronzes and old brocades, of casts, and sketches, and books, made tranquilly her home in Rome.

She missed the strong intellectual life that had surrounded her in Paris, the keen and witty discussion, the versatile talents, the brilliant paradoxes, the trenchant logic of that section of the world by which she had been surrounded; but in return she felt a dreamy and charming repose, a sense of peace and exhilaration both in one; thought was lulled and basked only in the imme-

morial treasures of the past; strife seemed far away, and the mere sense of physical life seemed enough.

She regretted that she had not come unknown to all the motley winter world that ever and again broke the charm of this spell which falls on every artist and every poet entering Rome. She thrust it away as often as she could, but she had celebrity, and it had curiosity, and it buzzed about her and would not be gainsaid. She would fain have shut herself alone in her frescced rooms when she was not amongst the marbles of Vatican or Capitol, or beneath the ilexes of Borghese and Pamfili. But it is not easy to escape from the world of ordinary men and women, or to escape publicity, when you have a public name; and people were eager to visit Etoile and say that they had seen her at home, with her olive velvet skirts, and her old Flemish laces, and her background of palms, and her great dog on her hearth, and on her easel some sketch half-covered with some relic of gold brocade.

'As they must come some time, let them all

come together, and not spoil the week,' she said, with a shrug of her shoulders, and named Sundays for her martyrdom.

'I will not come on Sundays,' murmured Ioris as he heard her say it.

Etoile smiled. 'Oh, yes, you will—if your sovereign-mistress order you to accompany her.'

'*Plaît-il?*' said Ioris, with a look of innocent unconsciousness; then added, in a low tone, 'You are pleased to be cruel.'

The Casa Challoner itself received on a Wednesday, making on that day a solemn religious sacrifice to the Bona Dea. It was specially swept and garnished, morally as well as actually; the pipes and cigars were locked up, the too-suggestive statuettes put out of sight; the good-looking slaves all banished; and little Effie, prettily dressed, was prominently petted by her mother; Mr. Challoner was as cordial and communicative as nature would permit him to become, and Lady Joan was as full of proper sentiments and domestic interests as if she were a penny paper or a shilling periodical. In her bevy of English dowagers, American damsels,

and Scotch cousins, amidst the bankers and consuls' and merchants' wives, the small gentilities and the free-born republicans, Lady Joan was sublime: she would have been worthy the burin of Balzac and the crowquill of Thackeray.

Ioris was usually banished from these Wednesdays, but Lady Joan would generally speak of him once in five minutes. 'Io's gone to get me some camellias,' or 'Io's gone to look at some pictures.' Or she would turn over the photograph album before Mrs. Grundy and say, 'Yes, that's Io—you met him here last week. Handsome? Well, we don't think him quite that, but we're very fond of him, poor fellow.'

And Mrs. Grundy would go away quite satisfied, and take her daughter on the following Wednesday; for Mrs. Grundy will suppose anything rather than it were possible for anybody to deceive herself.

'Showed me the man's likeness openly, her husband standing by and the dear Bishop,' Mrs. Grundy would say afterwards. 'Of course there's nothing in it—*nothing!* Do you suppose she would show me his photograph if there were?

It is the purest friendship—the most perfect kindness.'

All the bankers', and consuls', and merchants' wives, all the small gentilities, and the free-born republicans, who did not go to the Sundays on Montecavallo, used to compare her admirable Wednesdays, with the teapot and the small talk, to those iniquitous Sabbath-days.

'They say you can't see across the rooms for the smoke at the Comtesse Etoile's—there are all kinds of liqueurs—anybody plays and sings that likes. The Prince of Scheldt sung heaps of *café-chantant* and guard-room songs last Sunday, and imitated Teresa and then cats on the roofs—oh! scandalous, quite scandalous! They say——'

And being shut out from the Sundays, they would go and take the tea and muffins on a Wednesday, and feel what a blessing it was to move only in irreproachable society.

'Yes, *I* don't go on the Sundays either; at least, I go very seldom,' said Lady Joan, and let a shade of regret on her frank face hint the rest.

'The Etoile Sundays are delightful,' said

Lady Cardiff, who did go, and was reassured that she had done quite right in going by meeting Princess Vera in the doorway, and another ambassadress a little further on. 'I like her very much—I like her immensely; though she never does seem to see that Somebody is Anybody, and was contemptuous, actually *contemptuous*, to the Prince of Scheldt; while she was everything that was amiable to some horrid little snuffy creature, eighty years old, who happened to have all Beethoven and Schumann at his fingers' ends. Yes, I like her. She seems to look over one, through one, past one; and that isn't comfortable or complimentary; but she pleases me. She isn't a bit like anybody else. She makes me think of Sappho and St. Dorothea. What are you laughing at, pray?'

Ioris, despite his protest, did come now and then on the Sundays, but he came alone and rarely.

To Etoile he said: 'You have said I am a slave; I will not exhibit myself with my chains on to the merciless raillery of your eyes, and—I do not care to come when others monopolise you.'

To Lady Joan he said: 'Ah, *ma chère*, you know I am afraid of "celebrities." Leave me in peace. I see her too often as it is in your house for my tranquillity.'

That was no lie; but his hearer did not understand it in its true sense, and was pleased and satisfied.

'Io won't go near her if you drag him with ropes,' she said to her watchdog, Marjory Scrope.

The watchdog, with a keener and sharper *flaire*, had already smelt danger.

And once, twice, thrice the watchdog going to copy the Rospigliosi Aurora, on an order of Lord Fingal's, saw a tall and slender form that she knew, pass the palace-gate of Etoile in bright mornings at noontide.

CHAPTER XIII.

'BOUGHT it for eight hundred francs, and can sell it, my dear madam, for a hundred thousand, honour bright!' the O'Glenamaddy, an Irish member of Parliament, was calling out in highest glee in the Lady Joan's morning-room. 'Two men scrubbin' the dirt off all day long, and two dozen sheets of waddin' used already—it's almost clane—and it's a real great picture! What school, madam? Oh, it's not a picture of a school at all—it's a "Salutation to the Virgin," madam, twelve feet by twenty. Who by? Ah, now, that I'm not shure of, but it's a very old master. Cara—Cara—Caradoggia, I'll be thinkin'. Count Burletta says I'd get a hundred thousand

to-morrow for it aisy; but I'll not be selling it. I'll send it home to the ould place. It's a wonderful place, madam, is Rome, for pickin' up treasures in the dirt, and I cannot be grateful enough to ye for having put me in the way of doin' it. With a little ready money, and a little knowledge, it's wonderful what a fortune one may make. Not that I'm wantin' one; but when one has childern there's never too much broth in the old pot—is there, now? Only eight hundred francs my picture!—think o' that! Say, countin' cleanin', and the waddin', a thousand all told. And lyin' without a purchaser ever since the conquest of Italy by Bonaparte; and such a mass of soot and dust, that if your good husband hadn't pointed out the value of it to me I'd have taken it for a chimney-board and nothin' better. Indeed I would. What a thing it is to be clever! And didn't ye say ye'd take me to a new shop to-morrow mornin' that ye know of?—that is, I mane, an old shop. I love an antique bronze, madam, better than anythin' in the world—mighty old, ye know, madam, and green as grass, with plenty of pattern on it.'

'You mean patina,' said the Lady Joan, repressing a smile. 'Dear O'Glen, of course I shall be only too delighted to take you anywhere or serve you in any way; and about the picture I'm enchanted. Such a find as that don't occur once in a dozen years; and if Mr. Challoner hadn't been so fond of you he would never have let you run off with it. I'll come and see it to-morrow, and bring Io. And now you must stop for luncheon. I've got some real Southdown thyme-fed meat for you; I sent over for the breed myself. They'd such wretched, long-legged, fleshless beasts at Fiordelisa when I went there first! *Now* our mutton fetches far and away the first price in the market; indeed, Spillman buys it up always.'

'What a treasure of a woman ye are!' sighed the O'Glenamaddy. 'Ye know everything, from antiquity to mutton! Quite amazin'! Ah, sir, ye've drawn a prize indeed in your marryin'; and few prizes it is that there are!'

Mr. Challoner bowed—gratified.

The O'Glenamaddy could not stop for the mutton, being very busy, and post-haste on his

way back for the opening of the Dublin season; and the Lady Joan was not ill-pleased that he could not. The O'Glenamaddy was a delightful person, of a childlike faith and an elastic purse, but she had had enough of him. Moreover, she expected Etoile to luncheon, having organised a party to the Grotto of Egeria, and she would not have cared for her to hear of the Salutation to the Virgin and the sheets of wadding.

She herself was in high spirits, having received a rather chillily-worded invitation for herself and husband, and their friend the Prince Ioris, to go up and breakfast with her mighty cousins the Hebrides, who had just come to their big villa outside by the Porta Pia. But she did not mind its being chilly; it would serve her purpose as well as if it were warm. A single invitation to breakfast or dinner at the Countess of Hebrides' always filled Mrs. Grundy's mouth with sweetmeats and silence safely for the season. True, neither the Earl nor the Countess of Hebrides liked her, and asked her as little and as coldly as possible to their house. But what of that?

Lady Joan floated herself by means of her big relations as swimmers in a storm by air-belts. Cousins very near to her might come to study art in Rome; but if they studied it in humble dwellings, and had no taste or figure for Society, their relationship was sternly rejected at the Casa Challoner. But when cousins removed twice a hundred times, as Scotch cousins can be, came with pretty handles to their names, and cousins at the great hotels, the hospitality of the Casa Challoner was truly Highland in its lavishness, and a series of excellent dinner-parties proclaimed the new arrival and the near relationship to the city.

Nothing could exceed the cordial good understanding of Mr. Challoner and his wife at such times as these. They walked together, drove together, never spoke without a smile, and called each other 'my love' and 'my dear' with the most excellent reciprocity.

The Countess of Hebrides, who had always wondered at the odd marriage 'Archie's daughter' had made, was obliged to concede that the *mésalliance* had turned out better than might have

been feared, and that the husband seemed a good creature; and so let the good creature make purchases for her in Etruscan jewellery, and Castellani necklaces, and Roman antiquities, and modern Fortunys and Tito Contis.

The mighty Hebrides never stayed very long at a time; but these great people are like the sun, and leave a trail of glory behind them long after they have passed out of sight.

The afterglow of them rested on the Casa Challoner and gilded it like the Ark of the Covenant in the sight of all the artists and journalists, and *bric-à-brac* collectors, and trans-atlantic wayfarers who made the sum of their daily society, and who drifted perpetually in and out of their hospitable chambers, and who in return defended everywhere the Challoner reputation with as much ardour and perhaps as little discretion as they defended a doubtful Guercino that they wanted to sell, or an antique Pausanias, of which everything was modern except the right ear.

The English society of Winter Cities is motley. There are two parts to it: the small fish that

always live in the foreign water, and the bigger fish that only float through it. The fish that live in the water, who for the most part have mould on their backs of some 'story' or another, and cannot well live in their own native streams, vie with each other for the big fish that only come to tarry for a season, with all the glory of diamond-bright scales upon them, and all their signet-marks as monarchs of the deep. When a big fish arrives, the little fish all rush to catch the shadow of his glory; and there are no bigger fish anywhere than these salmon from north of Tweed with which the Lady Joan claimed kinship.

And it was her mighty skill in catching these big fish that kept herself in smooth waters.

Mrs. Macscrip, the banker's wife, whose father had driven a wheelbarrow and wielded an auctioneer's hammer in New York, would not quarrel with a woman who could ask her to luncheon with that very great lady the Countess of Hebrides. Mrs. Middleway, the evangelical pastor's better half, could only eagerly return calls that brought her into the same chambers with that really noble and Christian gentleman, Lord Fingal; and all the

rest of the little people who were the mouth-pieces of that irresistible potentate Mrs. Grundy would not be either cold or censorious on anyone who could call half the Peerage 'my cousins.'

Lady Joan pleased Mrs. Grundy, and most other women, for many reasons.

First of all, she was indisputably a lady in her own right and a Perth-Douglas; and besides, there was that floating impression that she had something to hide, and something to fear, which enabled them to feel above her level. Water may like to find its own level, but women do not. Again, she took extreme trouble to conciliate her own sex. She was morbidly anxious about their estimate of her; her braggadocio often veiled a quaking pulse. For women she hung her Christmas-tree with pretty trifles; for women she bought tickets at charity balls, and gave them lavishly away to large families of marriageable daughters; for women she gave her carefully calculated dinners when a duke's eldest son or a rich unmarried commoner was passing through Rome; for women, indeed, she would

even go so far as to find amongst all her *roba* a few lengths of real old Venetian lace, or a genuine rococo locket, and let some happy fair one go off with it really at a bargain. And all this study and self-sacrifice brought her in a rich harvest.

For any harvest is rich to us that is the one of our desire; and the light of Lady Joan's eyes was her own face reflected in a Louis Quinze mirror at some great banker's ball, and her own name inscribed on the books of some hotel where some royal princess was staying; her own Delft card-plate filled with polished pasteboard, and her own little drawing-room packed with persons who were Personages.

Throughout Society there is everywhere to be met with a large class of well-born people who want perpetual amusement and cannot pay for it. They are the offshoots of the nobilities of nations, the flowers that are next the rose; the fringes of the purples; the crumb of the cake. They are nicely mannered, frothily educated, have tastes wider than their purses, are utterly useless, and like to be amused from one

year's end to the other without its costing them greatly. They like to use other people's carriages, to have other people's opera-boxes, to dine out constantly, to get innumerable pleasantnesses without having their pride hurt by any approach to patronage; because they are gentlefolks—always gentlefolks—only they like life to be a merry-go-round on other people's horses.

It is a large class, and a gay one, and an amiable one, and a very grateful one—so long as you are able to entertain it. When the day comes that you cannot do so it will forget you —that is all.

It will not be bitter about you: it has not mind enough for that; it will only forget you. It is always enjoying itself.

It is a class which abounds in all cities of pleasure; and its suffrages are to be bought. What pleases it, it will praise; and these praises are like little puffs of south wind: they will send up a monster balloon like a soap-bubble, if only there be but enough of them.

The Lady Joan, who had been born amongst the purples, but had been forced to live amongst

its fringes, courted this numerous class, and succeeded with it.

'I took Io to my dear Hebrides; they're so fond of him!' she would be able to say for a twelvemonth; so she thought to herself now, receiving the Hebrides invitation; and in her mind's eye she could see all the bankers', and consuls', and merchants' wives, all the little gentilities, and all the freeborn Americans, running about, and saying with unctuous lips, 'She took him to the Hebrides'! How *can* there be anything in it?'

And if ever Lady Joan blessed Providence she blessed it for Scotch cousinship.

At this moment, however, she put aside both the great Hebrides, and the Salutation to the Virgin, and arrayed herself in the character she always wore for Voightel's friend.

She wore many characters, according to her spectators. For the great Scotch cousins she was a very happy and virtuous wife; ill-placed, indeed, in a social position unworthy of her, but with qualities that would have graced a duchess's coronet. To the world in general she was a much-enduring and much-forgiving martyr; a

sacrifice made by her family to the golden calf, and heroically pressing the knife of sacrifice meekly to her bosom. To a chosen few she was an adventurous, devil-may-care, high-spirited creature, who threw her cap over the mill and didn't care who saw it in the air. To herself she was a combination of fine mind and fearless nature, a sort of Madame Tallien dashed with the virile vigour of a Lady of Lathom.

But even the chosen few never saw her as she actually was, and it may certainly be averred that she herself never did. She thought she had a will of iron, a brain of steel, a dauntless courage, and a matchless wit. She never dreamed that she was after all only a terrible coward at heart, disguised in a fine swagger like Pistol's, having neither the force in her to defy society nor the force in her to deny her passions.

At this moment she arrayed herself in the part that she always thought most appropriate for receiving a person who knew Voightel and lived in Paris, and did her best to seem to Etoile a clever, brilliant woman of the world, with honest outspokenness of tongue and fearless

utterances of advanced thought, yet one that never affected to be altogether above the mundane amusements of a pleasant society that adored her as one of its leaders.

'So delighted to see you; so kind of you to come!' she cried, with that cordiality of welcome which looked so real when she did not upset it with a bit of rudeness or bad temper. 'You are always with Princess Vera, aren't you? How can you condescend to such small folks as we are? But I'm charmed that you *do*. Will a feminine Velasquez like yourself deign to help me in a most important question? Look here at all these old plates. Io's brought them for me to pick out a costume for the Clams' fancy ball. What do you say to this—or this? They're all very stiff, but that style rather suits me, I think, and I've lots of brocade doing nothing. Don't you think this one, if it were made of ruby velvet, and the stomacher sewn with seed-pearls? I bought a lot the other day. And the ruff will be becoming. And I've heaps of old Venetian prints. Io says these plates aren't correct. He's some old family portrait he wants

me to dress like. You know he's such a fidget about historical accuracy. He made himself wretched the other night because my Louis Treize costume had eighteenth century buttons on it and lace only fifty years old. He said I was a dancing anachronism. Good gracious! here he is—come to luncheon, actually—a thing he never does. That's because *you're* here! My dear Io, can't you throw your coat down without breaking those tulips all to pieces?'

The fallen petals of the tulips made her eyes darken angrily. Why did he come to luncheon when he was not ordered? Of course when ordered he had to come, no matter how inconvenient to himself; but any sign of an independent will in him was a glimpse of that cloven hoof of rebellion which she had believed that she had crushed under for ever.

When he rebelled she always made him ridiculous. Before he could speak she tossed him the costume drawings.

'Here, Comtesse Etoile has chosen this dress for me,' she called to him. 'Take a pencil and write out what the stuff and all ought to be on

the margin, and then Mariannina can follow your notes. Have you been to the Palmiro sale? I hope to goodness you didn't let that Capo di Monte slip through your fingers. Has Davis's agent got it? Oh, good heavens, Io, what a fool you are! I knew how it would be if I didn't go myself! Mr. Challoner 'll be furious. There'll be no peace for a week. It's always so when you do anything alone.'

'*Ma chère,* the person from London——' began Ioris. But she never indulged him by hearing his explanations.

'Nonsense. Of course Davis's agent got it if you weren't quick enough. Don't talk rubbish. You know well enough I'd told you to get it at any price—any price. It will fetch hundreds in Pall Mall. All the rest of the Palmiro things were trash, but that was worth any money. But it's always so when you go alone. Have you had those grapes and woodcocks sent up to the Hebrides? Did you send to Fiordelisa for the camellias for to-night? And have you told 'em to blister Pippo? Oh, you'll be going to the stable to sit with him. What do you

think he did do?' she pursued, turning to Etoile. 'When his old mare was blistered last summer he stayed with her all day long, because he thought she felt the pain less if he stroked her! I believe he'll want to give the hares and foxes anæsthetics before we shoot 'em next! There he was all day long in the mare's stall, reading Giusti and stroking her neck. He wore mourning when the old beast died.'

'*Oh!—carissima mia!*——'

'Oh, you know you did, or you wanted to, if I hadn't laughed at you. Now, write those notes clear, so that Mariannina can read 'em. Ruby velvet, and just a touch here and there of gold. I want to use up that *lame d'oro* we got in the Ghetto. The stomacher isn't cut right? Well, draw it the shape it should be. Shall it be sewn with seed-pearls or Turkish sequins? Oh, pearls, I think. We bought all those ropes of 'em the other day, and I may as well wear 'em before— —'

'Before we sell them again,' she was going to say; but instead, as Etoile was there, substituted a less telltale phrase.

'Before I get sick of the sight of them, lying about in that dish. One does get sick of pearls so soon. Now, diamonds never pall on you. They seem always changing. When a fairy sends me anything for my birthday, I wish she'd always send me diamonds.'

Ioris sighed. He knew what that meant. And diamonds cost money, and he was not rich. He sketched the Venetian costume obediently in silence. Lady Joan walked over to him and rested one hand on his shoulder, and with the other stroked back the dark hair of his head as it was bent over the drawing.

All the while she looked at Etoile furtively, as though by the action she would say, 'Take care what you do. This is mine.'

Ioris moved under her touch a little petulantly. He went on drawing without response.

Etoile looked at him through dreaming eyes; that delicate aquiline profile against the high crimson lights of the wall-hangings had a fascination for her as for all artists. For the moment she felt a sense of disgust to see those strong, firm, sinewy hands clasped on his shoulder like

a hand that holds, and holds, for ever. She rose and turned from the sight, and went to a little Albano hanging near.

Ioris threw his pencil away broken.

'It is of no use drawing on that wretched paper,' he said, displacing the hand that was on his shoulder by a quick and, as it seemed, accidental manœuvre. 'I will send you the costume later. It will be much easier to copy at once that Venetian portrait I told you of; you shall have it by to-morrow morning.'

'Luncheon is ready,' said the Lady Joan curtly, and she went in without ceremony to her dining-room, where she scolded her little girl for having put on silk when she ought to have put on merino, and did a battle-royal with her husband about the disputed frock. Of course she did not care a rush about the frock, but the fierce disputation did her good. The child was brought up on very simple principles. What her father ordered her mother forbade, and what her mother commanded her father refused. The child had quickly learned how to get all she wanted by the mere process of pitting them one against each other.

'Mamma will let me have it, because papa can't bear me to,' she would say to her little companions, with questionable grammar but the unquestionable principles proper to a young daughter of a house whose foundation-stone was the Triangle of Dumas.

All through luncheon Lady Joan descanted on the extravagance of the offending frock and the injury done to her by the loss of the Capo di Monte to Davis.

She was a woman whose passions, like the fires in Vesuvius, threw up much smoke and many stones.

Ioris talked of literature and art, ate only a few of his own grapes, and for once disregarded his hostess.

Mr. Challoner, who always listened and watched impassive as Fate and as immutable, commenting on all things, and interfering in none, like the Chorus to a Greek play—Mr. Challoner thought to himself that his own vengeance was dawning.

But after all Mr. Challoner was a man of the world. Things were better for him as they were.

Peace is a calmer thing than revenge—especially when peace means that some one else is worried instead of yourself, and revenge means that you will be left all alone to bear the beating of the storm.

Mr. Challoner, as a student of human nature and a mere mortal man, could not but enjoy the prevision that Ioris was drifting unconsciously away into love elsewhere. But Mr. Challoner, as a *mari complaisant* and a philosopher, knew that this drifting away would be a fatal blow to his own rest and tranquillity.

Solomon thought a dinner of herbs with quietness better than a stalled ox and contention; but modern men and women, who have no fancy for herbs in these days, unless mixed with sherry and soles by an excellent cook, contrive by these tacit and amicable arrangements to obtain both the ox and the quietness.

Compromise is the note of the present century and the choice of all wise men. Arbitration instead of arms; damages instead of vengeance; give-and-take instead of cut-and-thrust; universal doubt and polite suspicion instead of frank faith or stout denial. Compromise every-

where, caretaking, timorous, shrewd, dubious, apprehensive, wise: compromise is the supreme art of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Challoner and his wife studied this great theory to perfection; and it was only because they, like the greatest of mortals, were human that they sometimes forgot its rule so far as to quarrel about their shares of a picture's profits or fling their respective secrets at each other's head. This was very seldom; and besides, what did it matter? It was only when nobody else was there.

'You think me very insincere?' murmured Ioris to Etoile, a quarter of an hour later.

'Insincere? What have I said?'

'In words nothing. Your eyes say it.'

'My eyes are very ill-bred then.'

'Nay, tell me the truth.'

'Well, I should think you were very frank by nature, but are somewhat false from habit.'

'And what makes you suppose that?'

'How can I tell? Artists, you see, are like dogs: they go by instinct, and draw deductions without being aware of it. We are unreasonable animals, not fit for drawing-rooms.'

'But what should make you imagine me insincere?'

She laughed at his persistency.

'Well, do you not always call your friend "*ma chère*" when I only am with you both, and most ceremoniously "Madame" when other people are by?'

'Oh, that is only friendship. You must not infer more than they mean from such little slips of the tongue.'

'I infer just what they do mean—no more.'

Ioris smiled. A man cannot help smiling when one woman talks to him of his position with another. It is not vanity; it is recollection and anticipation combined.

'You are very mischievous, madame,' he answered airily. 'Perhaps one does learn to lie in the world. Society has made falsehood its axle-tree, and cannot well turn round without it. But I do not think I ever should lie to you.'

'Why? What is there about me? I am not like your old stone Bocca della Verita, to bite the hand off all false speakers.'

'No, you are something much better,' he said abruptly. 'You are one of those women who shame men into truth.'

His eyes dwelt on her with earnestness, with warmth, with a passing sadness. He touched her hand with that hesitating timidity, which in him was as successful with women as audacity. His fingers closed on hers one moment with a sort of supplication in the gentleness of the action.

They were standing in the anteroom of the Casa Challoner. Lady Joan came through the oriental curtain dividing the rooms; and saw.

Her brows contracted, but she gave no other sign of anger.

'Are you people ready?' she cried, in her cordial and ringing voice; she had planned a drive to show her guest the Caffarella. 'My dear Comtesse, have you got enough on? You know it grows awfully cold at twilight. I was afraid Mr. Challoner would insist on our having his company; but the dear Dean has carried him off to the English schools. Heaven be praised for all its small mercies. You'd never forget it if you heard him prose about Numa. "Numa

never existed at all." Well, settle it so and have done with it, I say. But not a bit of it; he'll preach on for three hours and a half to prove that Numa was moonshine. As if anybody could prove a negation! Call for Eccelino. We'll take him up at the Circle, I promised him; and the other men rode on before. Take heaps of cigars, Io. How *could* you lose that Capo di Monte to-day? It makes me so savage. You are like a baby in some things. I do believe if it wasn't for me you'd be ruined to-morrow, and have to sit on the Spanish Steps to get halfpence. Let's be off, or we shall have all the daylight gone.'

And Lady Joan showed herself solicitous as she got into the carriage that her guest should be protected by scarfs and furs against the hard wind blowing from the Appenines, with all the frank and pleasant cordiality that a wise woman displays when she has a grudge to pay off—by-and-by.

Lady Joan laughed and talked her brightest as they rolled along; and when she chose she could be very agreeable in a cheerful and offhand fashion, which won her much admiration amongst

that large proportion of society which thinks good spirits a pretty compliment to itself. She had seen a great deal of men and manners; she had seen most cities and some few courts; she read human nature well, though narrowly; she could tell a tale with point and humour, espepecially when it had in it a flavour of broad mirth. Within herself she was deeply incensed at what she had seen and heard. But then she reasoned, Io could only have been making game of that stuck-up adventuress: he disliked Etoile; he had always said so. So she was very amiable to Etoile as they drove to the Grotto of Egeria, and did not chastise her lover more severely than by bestowing all her smiles on Eccelino di Sestri, a good-looking courtier, who had adored herself *dans le temps.*

'Io's my friend, of course, just as Eccelino is,' she would say in her most candid manner. It was a distinguishing feature of Lady Joan's administrative capabilities that she could keep men together without their quarrelling about her. Perhaps the reason was that she let each of them think that she cheated for him all the others; or

perhaps the reason was that the love she inspired was not of the strongest kind.

The carriage went out by the Albano road, under the leafless elm trees, to the silent places where Egeria's altar lies fallen under the green pall of the ivy and the wild waterfed moss.

The sun was still high, the sky cloudless, and the north wind dropped as they entered the valley of the Almo.

'No doubt that unhappy Numa, if he ever did exist, must have been awfully bullied by his wife; I should think she was a scold; and the length of her tongue made him adore the Muse of Silence as much as I do when Mr. Challoner vouchsafes one of his historical orations,' said Lady Joan, with her bright laugh, as she got out of her carriage, sauntered down into the dell, lighted her cigar, and pitched stones at the fallen statue that lies like a dead thing beneath the arching rock.

'All lovers adore that Muse. Numa was only like all of us there,' said the Count di Sestri.

'Do they? I don't know anything about lovers; I only care for friends,' laughed the Lady

Joan, with her cigarette in her white teeth. She, for her own part, did not adore Silence at any time, and in her own heart considered that it was of no use being made love to at all unless you could publish the triumph of it right and left to your society. She liked to fasten her lover to her skirts as she pinned a signal-ribbon to her domino at the Veglione. She was not a woman to let her Romeo go from her when the lark sang; on the contrary, she liked all the cocks in the neighbourhood to crow their shrillest and call attention to him on her balcony; though, of course, she would say to the cocks, like the cat in the *Animaux Parlants*, 'Je suis une chatte anglaise et je n'ai point d'amants!' None of the animals believed the cat, certainly. Still in its way the cry was useful.

Ioris went forward and gathered a sprig of broom and a few sprays of maidenhair fern, and gave them to Etoile.

'Juvenal would be satisfied, I suppose. He hated the costly marbles and the artificial ornamentation; there is little enough left of them now. I am sure you, too, like it best as it is?'

'Yes, the bubbling brook sings the fittest song for Egeria; and poor Tatia, too, whose shade must have been so jealous of her. I am sure she never cared for all her mortal rivals in the new city on the hills there, but Egeria must have made her heart ache; Egeria, who came on the wings of the wind as she did herself, and came into her own temple to take his very soul away——'

'Have you ever loved any one, I wonder?' thought the Lady Joan, turning and looking at her with a sudden thought.

'Egeria also forgave even disloyalty,' said Ioris aloud. 'No infidelity changed her. She was faithful to him through death and after it.'

Etoile smiled.

'Which is only to say I should think that the nymph was a woman after all.'

'How little you know of women!'

'Don't turn cynic, Io,' cried Lady Joan, flinging her cigar end at the mutilated statue. 'It won't suit you at all. You are naturally a cross between Faust and the young man in the *Peau de Chagrin*; between Romeo and Reuben,

unstable as water, &c.—you know what I mean. You are as credulous as a seal and as soft-hearted as a dog: cynicism is for men who drink brandy, beat their wives, wear long beards, and never wash their hands. Nature made *you*——'

But he lost this definition of his character, as he had wandered away after Etoile, who had gone further down to where the little stream bubbled up amongst the mosses that had once been Numa's bed.

Lady Joan glanced after them, and lit a new cigarette. She knew passion and all its ways too well not to know the meaning of that silent unconscious irresistible magnetism which draws two unfamiliar lives one to another in the indefinable physical attraction which is the birth of love. But her natural quickness of intelligence was obscured by her overweening vanity.

'He is only fooling her,' she thought with indifference and amusement. 'After all, if he like to do that, let him.'

If another woman were made to love her lover hopelessly, that would be only so much

additional entertainment for herself. She was so sure of him—as sure as she was of the ring on her hand, that would stay there for ever unless she threw it aside.

'Ioris seems to admire that new comer,' said the Count Eccelino.

'Oh dear, no, he doesn't,' said Lady Joan coolly. 'He rather dislikes her; thinks her insolent and *tête montée*. But I've told him to be agreeable to her. She is a great favourite of Voightel's. You know dear old Voightel, the cleverest man in all Europe. We were so fond of him long ago at Damascus.'

Of course he was only fooling Etoile, she said to herself, glancing, as she laughed with the other men about her, at the two figures that had strayed away side by side under the shadows of the trees along the stream towards the ruins that tradition allies with the memory of Volumnia and Virgilia, and with the great cry from the breaking heart of the hero:

> 'I melt, and am not
> Of stronger earth than others.'

Of course he was only fooling Etoile; he

disliked her, so he had said a score of times; nevertheless that solitary walk displeased her.

'Who is she? I haven't an idea,' she said roughly to another question of Eccelino di Sestri's. 'Of course she's known all the world over for that matter, by name; but as to where she came from, I should be very sorry to have to answer for that. These kind of people always drop down from the moon, or say they do, to demonstrate that they didn't jump up from the otter.'

'But she is a Countess d'Avesnes.'

'Yes. That's her name, or she says it is. It sounds very aristocratic; but I don't much believe myself in aristocracy that has no relations, and travels about with a big dog, and has the knowledge of Manon Lescaut, with the innocent airs of Una. Men like that sort of thing; they believe in naked feet walking over hot ploughshares without a burn. We don't. We're more consistent. We don't look for daisies on dung-heaps. It's rubbish, you know. After all, think what that woman has seen! I don't say there's any real harm in her;

Voightel would not have sent her to *me* if there had been, of course: but it's perfectly ridiculous to suppose that she has the white-paper-past that she pretends to have. She's very clever, that everybody knows; and a very clever woman can't be a very innocent one—when she's an artist, I mean.'

The Lady Joan concluded with a puff of smoke up into the traceries of the ash-boughs overhead, for she remembered that she always pictured herself to her world as combining in her own person the two excellences which she had just declared to be incapable of co-existence.

'*Calomniez, calomniez!*' said Voltaire; '*calomniez toujours: quelque chose restera.*'

So the Lady Joan was of opinion that if you only lie everlastingly, something of it all will always be believed somewhere.

If you are only well beforehand with your falsehood all will go upon velvet; nobody ever listens to a rectification. 'Is it possible?' everybody cries with eager zest; but when they have only to say 'Oh, wasn't it so?' nobody feels any particular interest. It is the first statement that

has the swing and the success; as for explanation or retractation—pooh!—who cares to be bored?

She knew very well that what she said was not true. But Lady Joan knew also that a little fiction always came in handy.

Besides, when Ioris had wandered away without permission along the bend of the water, it was only human nature to fling a stone after his companion.

Moreover, she was really incredulous that any one with such opportunities for amusement as Etoile had possessed, could have been idiot enough to have led as quiet a life as a rosebush in a nun's lattice window.

Men might believe it. But she was not to be taken in by any such nonsense.

Fame to a woman is like the *tunica incendialis* of the Latin martyrs, and it is never the fault of other women like the Lady Joan, if the torches of slander do not set it ablaze till the sulphur flames burn up the life within.

She smiled her sunniest and kindliest, however, when the truants returned from the temple

of Fortuna Mutabilis, as the first shadow of sunset fell over the grass.

'My dear! are you not afraid of the cold?' she said affectionately to Etoile. 'We must be moving, I fear, and leave the ghost of Egeria to salute the moon all alone. You must come back to dinner with us. Oh, yes, you must! I wish you would go to the masquerade with me; but you care so little for those things. You don't get half out of life that you might, believe me. However, I suppose in return for all you lose, primroses talk to you, and stones have voices, and all that kind of thing. I've more of the Peter Bell in *me*. Give me my furs, Io; and call up the carriage. Oh, of course she'll come to dinner—I won't take any refusal. Mr. Challoner will discourse of nothing but Numa, unless we're strong enough in number to talk him down. Of all the cants, I do think that new cant of proving that nothing ever was, and that nobody ever lived, is the very worst bore that sceptical education has developed. Five o'clock! Tell them to drive fast. I shall take you home to dinner too, Eccelino; and I'll give you the cotillon

to-morrow night if you're good at the Mac-scrips.'

Count Eccelino bowed his ceremonious thanks with an air of ardent gratitude. But he was too used to receive favours of this sort whenever his friend was out of favour to be much flattered by them actually. As a punishment they were also lost upon Ioris, who, as they drove homeward, was silent, letting his dark eyes brood softly upon the face of Etoile, so that whenever she looked up she met their gaze in the pensive Roman twilight.

She persisted in not dining with them that night, and went to her own room and sat and dreamed, with her head on her hands, over a fire of oak and pine.

'That man is not happy,' she thought again and again; and she seemed always to feel that tender hesitating touch of his fingers, always to see those eloquent and wistful eyes in the evening shadows.

Meanwhile Lady Joan went home and dined, and then 'mystified' herself in loup and domino for that first Veglione of the year.

She had a passion for masquerades. No scrutiny of marital wrath drew her to heed the secresy of that most dingy and prosaic of all Venusbergs—a *baignoir au troisième.* No weak objections on the part of her lord to any pastimes of friendship drove her, as they drive some ill-used wives, to require the shelter of one of those little close-curtained cloth-hung closets, where the poor god of love is huddled up in a black sacque, and his rosy mouth soiled with champagne-cup. She could go home with her escort at four or five in the morning, and use her latch-key, and Mr. Challoner, like a sensible sleeper, only turned cosily in his bed at the back of the house, and, if he woke at all at the sound of his hall-door's unclosing, only thought what a fool the other man was to have danced attendance through all those hours in the noise and the heat of that dingy festival.

Lady Joan had no need of masquerades. With her latch-key in her pocket, and her friend's cab at her command, she could come and go, alone or accompanied, in that happy freedom which is the privilege of a perfect conjugal

comprehension. The cabman knew much more about her than Mr. Challoner.

But though she had no need of them, her soul adored the Veglione. That dance Macabre was the delight of her heart, as the Brumalia of the Roman matron's.

To mystify herself, or think she did so; to laugh louder than with due regard to society she ever could elsewhere; to throw a stone and grin undiscovered and pass on; to fasten strangers with her shining eyes, and jeer at them and leave them; to torment her friends and torture her foes, and sup and smoke and go home in the day-break, when the masks were all reeling up the streets and the carnival songs were greeting the sunrise—that was pleasure to the Lady Joan.

It requited her for a hundred dismal clerical luncheons off cold lamb and lettuce, with chaplains and consuls; it fortified her against a thousand big dinners with her tongue tied, and her 'dear Robert' at the bottom of the table.

Ioris sighed this evening as he fastened her mask behind her ears and went down with her into the dingy whirlpool. He was so tired of it all.

The thin disguises, the stupid jokes, the commonplace intrigues, the coarse pretence of deceiving and of being deceived, the noise, the uproar, the shrill cries, the headlong dances—they had grown so tiresome. He had laughed his lightest and waltzed his wildest in other years; but he was tired of it all—very tired—now as he walked about amongst the screaming crowd, and exchanged the vapid phrases of custom, with dominoes that were as well known to him as though he had met them in broad day; and heard the resonant voice of his empress ring loud above the music in merciless speech and worn-out jibes; and lighted her cigarettes, and carried her fan, and got her her claret-cup, and thought how long the night was—the boisterous, empty, joyless, senseless night, through which, all the while, he had to laugh and be ready with answer, and look amused, and turn an airy compliment, and join in all the mirth, and never show a yawn, but wait on duty till the kindly sun should rise, and so release him.

What weariness will men endure if only it be not in the name of virtue!

'A fine long night, Excellence!' said the cabman, with a radiant smile, as Ioris paid him while the bells of the first mass rung in the dawn.

'A terrible long night,' thought his employer, looking up at the blue morning skies.

The cabman, who, had he ever been cross-questioned by Society, could have rendered the clerical cold lamb for ever a Passover of the past to the Casa Challoner, drove away joyous to get his breakfast and gamble in the sun. Ioris went upstairs and shut the sun out, and threw himself on his bed.

'Good God! once I thought this, pleasure!' he murmured as his heavy eyelids fell.

So he had thought this—love.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

CHATTO & WINDUS'S

LIST OF BOOKS.

IMPORTANT VOLUME OF ETCHINGS.

Folio, cloth extra, £1 11*s.* 6*d.*

Examples of Contemporary Art.

ETCHINGS from Representative Works by living English and Foreign Artists. Edited, with Critical Notes, by J. COMYNS CARR.

"*It would not be easy to meet with a more sumptuous, and at the same time a more tasteful and instructive drawing-room book.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

Folio, half-bound boards, India proofs, 21*s.*

William Blake:

ETCHINGS from his Works. By WILLIAM BELL SCOTT. With descriptive Text.

"*The best side of Blake's work is given here, and makes a really attractive volume, which all can enjoy . . . The etching is of the best kind, more refined and delicate than the original work.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

NEW VOLUME OF HUNTING SKETCHES.

Oblong 4to, half-bound boards, 21*s.*

Canters in Crampshire.

By G. BOWERS. I. Gallops from Gorseborough. II. Scrambles with Scratch Packs. III. Studies with Stag Hounds.

Square 8vo, cloth, extra gilt, gilt edges, with Coloured Frontispiece and numerous Illustrations, 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Art of Beauty.

By Mrs. H. R. HAWEIS, Author of "Chaucer for Children." With nearly One Hundred Illustrations by the Author.

"A most interesting book, full of valuable hints and suggestions. . . . . If young ladies would but lend their ears for a little to Mrs. Haweis, we are quite sure that it would result in their being at once more tasteful, more happy, and more healthy than they now often are, with their false hair, high heels, tight corsets, and ever so much else, of the same sort."—NONCONFORMIST.

Crown 4to, containing 24 Plates beautifully printed in Colours, with descriptive Text, cloth extra, gilt, 6*s.*; illustrated boards, 3*s.* 6*d.*

Æsop's Fables

Translated into Human Nature. By C. H. BENNETT.

"For fun and frolic the new version of Æsop's Fables must bear away the palm. There are plenty of grown-up children who like to be amused; and if this new version of old stories does not amuse them they must be very dull indeed, and their situation one much to be commiserated."—MORNING POST.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with 639 Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*, a New Edition (uniform with "The Englishman's House") of

A Handbook of Architectural Styles.

Translated from the German of A. ROSENGARTEN by W. COLLETT-SANDARS. With 639 Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, Coloured Frontispiece and Illustrations, cloth gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

A History of Advertising,

From the Earliest Times. Illustrated by Anecdotes, Curious Specimens, and Biographical Notes of Successful Advertisers. By HENRY SAMPSON.

Crown 8vo, with Portrait and Facsimile, cloth extra, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Artemus Ward's Works:

The Works of CHARLES FARRER BROWNE, better known as ARTEMUS WARD. With Portrait, facsimile of Handwriting, &c.

"The author combines the powers of Thackeray with those of Albert Smith. The salt is rubbed in with a native hand—one which has the gift of tickling."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Small 4to, green and gold, 6*s.* 6*d.*; gilt edges, 7*s.* 6*d.*

As Pretty as Seven,

and other Popular German Stories. Collected by LUDWIG BECHSTEIN. With Additional Tales by the Brothers GRIMM, and 100 Illustrations by RICHTER.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

A Handbook of London Bankers;

With some Account of their Predecessors, the Early Goldsmiths; together with Lists of Bankers, from 1677 to 1876. By F. G. HILTON PRICE.

"*An interesting and unpretending little work, which may prove a useful contribution towards the history of a difficult subject. . . . Mr. Price's anecdotes are entertaining. . . . . There is something fascinating, almost romantic, in the details given us of Child's Bank. . . . There is a great deal of amusing reading and some valuable information in this book.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 9s.

Bardsley's Our English Surnames:

Their Sources and Significations. By CHARLES WAREING BARDSLEY, M.A. Second Edition, revised throughout, considerably enlarged, and partially rewritten.

"*Mr. Bardsley has faithfully consulted the original mediæval documents and works from which the origin and development of surnames can alone be satisfactorily traced. He has furnished a valuable contribution to the literature of surnames, and we hope to hear more of him in this field.*"—TIMES.

Demy 8vo, illustrated, 1s. each.

Henry Blackburn's Art Handbooks:

Academy Notes for 1877.

With 143 Illustrations of the Principal Pictures at Burlington House: more than One Hundred being Facsimiles of Sketches drawn by the Artists.

*** ACADEMY NOTES *for* 1875 *and* 1876 *may also be had, price One Shilling each.*

"*We at once take an opportunity of offering our thanks, as well as those of all visitors to the Exhibition, to Mr. Blackburn for his very carefully executed review of the Academy pictures, illustrated by some* 100 *woodcut memoranda of the principal pictures, almost half of them from the pencils of the painters themselves. A cheaper, prettier, or more convenient souvenir of the Exhibition it would be difficult to conceive and unreasonable to expect.*"—TIMES.

Pictorial Notes in the National Gallery.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL. With upwards of 100 Illustrations of the principal Pictures at Trafalgar Square; forming a complete Catalogue of the British Section.

The Old Masters at Trafalgar Square.

With numerous Illustrations. [*In the press.*

Pictures at South Kensington.

With 80 Illustrations of the Raphael Cartoons, the Sheepshanks Collection, &c.

Grosvenor Notes, 1878.

With numerous Illustrations, contributed by the Artists themselves. [*In the press.*

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 18*s.*

Baker's Clouds in the East:

Travels and Adventures on the Perso-Turkoman Frontier. By VALENTINE BAKER. With Maps and Illustrations, coloured and plain, from Original Sketches. Second Edition, revised and corrected.

"*A man who not only thinks for himself, but who has risked his life in order to gain information. . . . A most graphic and lively narrative of travels and adventures which have nothing of the commonplace about them.*"—LEEDS MERCURY.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Boccaccio's Decameron;

or, Ten Days' Entertainment. Translated into English, with an Introduction by THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A., F.S.A. With Portrait, and STOTHARD'S beautiful Copperplates.

Price One Shilling Monthly, with Four Illustrations.

Belgravia Magazine.

That the purpose with which "BELGRAVIA" was originated has been fulfilled, is shown by the popularity that has attended it since its first appearance. Aiming, as may be inferred from its name, at supplying the most refined and cultivated section of London society with intellectual pabulum suited to its requirements, it sprang at once into public favour, and has since remained one of the most extensively read and widely circulated of periodicals. In passing into new hands it has experienced no structural change or modification. Increased energy and increased capital have been employed in elevating it to the highest standard of excellence, but all the features that had won public appreciation have been retained, and the Magazine still seeks its principal support in the homes of Belgravia. As the means through which the writer most readily reaches the heart of the general public, and in consequence as the most important of aids in the establishment of morals and the formation of character, fiction still remains a principal feature in the Magazine. Two Serial Stories accordingly run through its pages; supplemented by short Stories, Novelettes, and narrative or dramatic Sketches: whilst Essays, Social, Biographical, and Humorous; Scientific Discoveries brought to the level of popular comprehension, and treated with a light touch; Poetry, of the highest character; and records of Adventure and Travel, form the remaining portion of the contents. Especial care is now bestowed upon the illustrations, of which no fewer than four appear in each number. Beyond the design of illustrating the article they accompany, these aim at maintaining a position as works of art, both as regards drawing and engraving. In short, whatever claims the Magazine before possessed to favour have now been enhanced, and the Publishers can but leave the result to a public that has seldom failed to appreciate all earnest, persistent, and well-directed efforts for its amusement and benefit.

*** *The THIRTY-FOURTH Volume of BELGRAVIA (which includes the* BELGRAVIA ANNUAL), *elegantly bound in crimson cloth, full gilt side and back, gilt edges, price* 7*s.* 6*d., is now ready.—Handsome Cases for binding the volume can be had at* 2*s. each.*

THIRD EDITION, crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 6*s.*

Boudoir Ballads:

Vers de Société: By J. ASHBY-STERRY.

Imperial 4to, cloth extra, gilt and gilt edges, price 21*s.* per volume.

Beautiful Pictures by British Artists:

A Gathering of Favourites from our Picture Galleries. In 2 Series.

The FIRST SERIES including Examples by WILKIE, CONSTABLE, TURNER, MULREADY, LANDSEER, MACLISE, E. M. WARD, FRITH, Sir JOHN GILBERT, LESLIE, ANSDELL, MARCUS STONE, Sir NOEL PATON, FAED, EYRE CROWE, GAVIN O'NEIL, and MADOX BROWN.

The SECOND SERIES containing Pictures by ARMYTAGE, FAED, GOODALL, HEMSLEY, HORSLEY, MARKS, NICHOLLS, Sir NOEL PATON, PICKERSGILL, G. SMITH, MARCUS STONE, SOLOMON, STRAIGHT, E. M. WARD, and WARREN.

All engraved on Steel in the highest style of Art. Edited, with Notices of the Artists, by SYDNEY ARMYTAGE, M.A.

"*This book is well got up, and good engravings by Jeens, Lumb Stocks, and others, bring back to us pictures of Royal Academy Exhibitions of past years.*'—TIMES.

Crown 8vo, with Photographic Portrait, cloth extra, 9*s.*

Blanchard's (Laman) Poems.

Now first Collected. Edited, with a Life of the Author (including numerous hitherto unpublished Letters from Lord LYTTON, LAMB, DICKENS, ROBERT BROWNING, and others), by BLANCHARD JERROLD.

"*His humorous verse is much of it admirable—sparkling with genuine 'esprit,' and as polished and pointed as Praed's.*"—SCOTSMAN.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Bret Harte's Select Works,

in Prose and Poetry. With Introductory Essay by J. M. BELLEW, Portrait of the Author, and 50 Illustrations.

"*Not many months before my friend's death, he had sent me two sketches of a young American writer (Bret Harte), far away in California ('The Outcasts of Poker Flat,' and another), in which he had found such subtle strokes of character as he had not anywhere else in late years discovered; the manner resembling himself, but the matter fresh to a degree that had surprised him; the painting in all respects masterly, and the wild rude thing painted a quite wonderful reality. I have rarely known him more honestly moved.*"—FORSTER'S LIFE OF DICKENS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Brand's Observations on Popular Antiquities,

chiefly Illustrating the Origin of our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions. With the Additions of Sir HENRY ELLIS. An entirely New and Revised Edition, with fine full-page Illustrations.

Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with full-page Portraits, 4*s.* 6*d.*

Brewster's (Sir David) Martyrs of Science.

Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Astronomical Plates, 4*s.* 6*d.*

Brewster's (Sir David) More Worlds than One, the Creed of the Philosopher and the Hope of the Christian.

Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6*s.*

Brillat-Savarin's Gastronomy as a Fine Art; or, The Science of Good Living. A Translation of the "Physiologie du Goût" of BRILLAT-SAVARIN, with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by R. E. ANDERSON, M.A.

"We have read it with rare enjoyment, just as we have delightedly read and re-read quaint old Izaak. Mr. Anderson has done his work of translation daintily, with true appreciation of the points in his original; and altogether, though late, we cannot but believe that this book will be welcomed and much read by many."—NONCONFORMIST.

Demy 8vo, profusely Illustrated in Colours, price 30*s.*

The British Flora Medica:

A History of the Medicinal Plants of Great Britain. Illustrated by a Figure of each Plant, COLOURED BY HAND. By BENJAMIN H. BARTON, F.L.S., and THOMAS CASTLE, M.D., F.R.S. A New Edition, revised, condensed, and partly re-written, by JOHN R. JACKSON, A.L.S., Curator of the Museums of Economic Botany, Royal Gardens, Kew.

THE STOTHARD BUNYAN.—Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

Edited by Rev. T. SCOTT. With 17 beautiful Steel Plates by STOTHARD, engraved by GOODALL; and numerous Woodcuts.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Byron's Letters and Journals.

With Notices of his Life. By THOMAS MOORE. A Reprint of the Original Edition, newly revised, Complete in One thick Volume, with Twelve full-page Plates.

"We have read this book with the greatest pleasure. Considered merely as a composition, it deserves to be classed among the best specimens of English prose which our age has produced. . . . The style is agreeable, clear, and manly, and when it rises into eloquence, rises without effort or ostentation. It would be difficult to name a book which exhibits more kindness, fairness, and modesty." —MACAULAY, in the EDINBURGH REVIEW.

Demy 4to, cloth extra, gilt edges, 31*s.* 6*d.*

Canova's Works in Sculpture and Modelling.

150 Plates, exquisitely engraved in Outline by MOSES, and printed on an India tint. With Descriptions by the Countess ALBRIZZI, a Biographical Memoir by CICOGNARA, and Portrait by WORTHINGTON.

"*The fertility of this master's resources is amazing, and the manual labour expended on his works would have worn out many an ordinary workman. The outline engravings are finely executed. The descriptive notes are discriminating, and in the main exact.*"—SPECTATOR.

Two Vols. imperial 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, the Plates beautifully printed in Colours, £3 3*s.*

Catlin's Illustrations of the Manners,

Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians: the result of Eight Years of Travel and Adventure among the Wildest and most Remarkable Tribes now existing. Containing 360 Coloured Engravings from the Author's original Paintings.

Small 4to, cloth gilt, with Coloured Illustrations, 10*s.* 6*d.*

Chaucer for Children:

A Golden Key. By Mrs. H. R. HAWEIS. With Eight Coloured Pictures and numerous Woodcuts by the Author.

"*It must not only take a high place among the Christmas and New Year books of this season, but is also of permanent value as an introduction to the study of Chaucer, whose works, in selections of some kind or other, are now text-books in every school that aspires to give sound instruction in English.*"—ACADEMY.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, with Coloured Illustrations and Maps, 24*s.*

Cope's History of the Rifle Brigade

(The Prince Consort's Own), formerly the 95th. By Sir WILLIAM H. COPE, formerly Lieutenant, Rifle Brigade.

"*This latest contribution to the history of the British army is a work of the most varied information regarding the distinguished regiment whose life it narrates, and also of facts interesting to the student in military affairs. . . . Great credit is due to Sir W. Cope for the patience and labour, extending over many years, which he has given to the work. . . . In many cases well-executed plans of actions are given.*"—MORNING POST.

"*Even a bare record of a corps which has so often been under fire, and has borne a part in important engagements all over the world, could not prove otherwise than full of matter acceptable to the military reader.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, Two very thick Volumes, 7*s.* 6*d.* each.

Cruikshank's Comic Almanack.

Complete in Two SERIES: The FIRST from 1835 to 1843; the SECOND from 1844 to 1853. A Gathering of the BEST HUMOUR of THACKERAY, HOOD, MAYHEW, ALBERT SMITH, A'BECKETT, ROBERT BROUGH, &c. With 2000 Woodcuts and Steel Engravings by CRUIKSHANK, HINE, LANDELLS, &c.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Colman's Humorous Works:

"Broad Grins," "My Nightgown and Slippers," and other Humorous Works, Prose and Poetical, of GEORGE COLMAN. With Life by G. B. BUCKSTONE, and Frontispiece by HOGARTH.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Portraits, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Creasy's Memoirs of Eminent Etonians;

with Notices of the Early History of Eton College. By Sir EDWARD CREASY, Author of "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." A New Edition, brought down to the Present Time, with 13 Illustrations.

"A new edition of 'Creasy's Etonians' will be welcome. The book was a favourite a quarter of a century ago, and it has maintained its reputation. The value of this new edition is enhanced by the fact that Sir Edward Creasy has added to it several memoirs of Etonians who have died since the first edition appeared. The work is eminently interesting."—SCOTSMAN.

To be Completed in Twenty-four Parts, quarto, at 5*s.* each, profusely illustrated by Coloured and Plain Plates and Wood Engravings,

Cyclopædia of Costume;

or, A Dictionary of Dress—Regal, Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military—from the Earliest Period in England to the reign of George the Third. Including Notices of Contemporaneous Fashions on the Continent, and preceded by a General History of the Costumes of the Principal Countries of Europe. By J. R. PLANCHÉ, Somerset Herald.— A Prospectus will be sent upon application. Part XIX. now ready.

"A most readable and interesting work—and it can scarcely be consulted in vain, whether the reader is in search for information as to military, court, ecclesiastical, legal, or professional costume. . . . All the chromo-lithographs, and most of the woodcut illustrations—the latter amounting to several thousands —are very elaborately executed; and the work forms a livre de luxe *which renders it equally suited to the library and the ladies' drawing-room."*—TIMES.

*** *Part XIV. contains the Completion of the DICTIONARY, which, as Vol. I. of the Book, forms a Complete Work in itself. This volume may now be had, handsomely bound in half red morocco, gilt top, price* £3 13*s.* 6*d. Cases for binding the volume may also be had, price* 5*s. each.*

The remaining Parts will be occupied by the GENERAL HISTORY OF THE COSTUMES OF EUROPE, arranged Chronologically.

Demy 8vo, half-bound morocco, 21*s.*

Dibdin's Bibliomania;

or, Book-Madness: A Bibliographical Romance. With numerous Illustrations. A New Edition, with a Supplement, including a Key to the Assumed Characters in the Drama.

Parts I. to XII. now ready, 21*s.* each.

Cussans' History of Hertfordshire.

By JOHN E. CUSSANS. Illustrated with full-page Plates on Copper and Stone, and a profusion of small Woodcuts.

"*Mr. Cussans has, from sources not accessible to Clutterbuck, made most valuable additions to the manorial history of the county from the earliest period downwards, cleared up many doubtful points, and given original details concerning various subjects untouched or imperfectly treated by that writer. The pedigrees seem to have been constructed with great care, and are a valuable addition to the genealogical history of the county. Mr. Cussans appears to have done his work conscientiously, and to have spared neither time, labour, nor expense to render his volumes worthy of ranking in the highest class of County Histories.*'
—ACADEMY.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Doran's Memories of our Great Towns.

With Anecdotic Gleanings concerning their Worthies and their Oddities. By Dr. JOHN DORAN, F.S.A.

SECOND EDITION, demy 8vo, cloth gilt, with Illustrations, 18*s.*

Dunraven's The Great Divide:

A Narrative of Travels in the Upper Yellowstone in the Summer of 1874. By the EARL of DUNRAVEN. With Maps and numerous striking full-page Illustrations by VALENTINE W. BROMLEY.

"*There has not for a long time appeared a better book of travel than Lord Dunraven's 'The Great Divide.' . . . The book is full of clever observation, and both narrative and illustrations are thoroughly good.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 24*s.*

Dodge's (Colonel) The Hunting Grounds

of the Great West: A Description of the Plains, Game, and Indians of the Great North American Desert. By RICHARD IRVING DODGE, Lieutenant-Colonel of the United States Army. With an Introduction by WILLIAM BLACKMORE; Map, and numerous Illustrations drawn by ERNEST GRISET.

"*This magnificent volume is one of the most able and most interesting works which has ever proceeded from an American pen, while its freshness is equal to that of any similar book. Colonel Dodge has chosen a subject of which he is master, and treated it with a fulness that leaves nothing more to be desired, and in a style which is charming equally for its picturesqueness and its purity.*"
—NONCONFORMIST.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 6*s.*

Emanuel On Diamonds and Precious

Stones: their History, Value, and Properties; with Simple Tests for ascertaining their Reality. By HARRY EMANUEL, F.R.G.S. With numerous Illustrations, Tinted and Plain.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Englishman's House:

A Practical Guide to all interested in Selecting or Building a House, with full Estimates of Cost, Quantities, &c. By C. J. RICHARDSON. Third Edition. With nearly 600 Illustrations.

*** *This book is intended to supply a long-felt want, viz., a plain, non-technical account of every style of house, with the cost and manner of building; it gives every variety, from a workman's cottage to a nobleman's palace.*

Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6*s.* per Volume; a few Large Paper copies (only 50 printed), at 12*s.* per Vol.

Early English Poets.

Edited, with Introductions and Annotations, by Rev. A. B. GROSART.

"*Mr. Grosart has spent the most laborious and the most enthusiastic care on the perfect restoration and preservation of the text; and it is very unlikely that any other edition of the poet can ever be called for. . . From Mr. Grosart we always expect and always receive the final results of most patient and competent scholarship.*"—EXAMINER.

1. *Fletcher's (Giles, B.D.)* *Complete Poems:* Christ's Victorie in Heaven, Christ's Victorie on Earth, Christ's Triumph over Death, and Minor Poems. With Memorial-Introduction and Notes. One Vol.
2. *Davies' (Sir John)* *Complete Poetical Works*, including Psalms I. to L. in Verse, and other hitherto Unpublished MSS., for the first time Collected and Edited. With Memorial-Introduction and Notes. Two Vols.
3. *Herrick's (Robert) Hesperides, Noble Numbers, and Complete Collected Poems.* With Memorial-Introduction and Notes, Steel Portrait, Index of First Lines, and Glossarial Index, &c. Three Vols.
4. *Sidney's (Sir Philip)* *Complete Poetical Works*, including all those in "Arcadia." With Portrait, Memorial-Introduction, Essay on the Poetry of Sidney, and Notes. Three Vols.
5. *Donne's (Dr. John)* *Complete Poetical Works*, including the Satires and various from MSS. With Memorial-Introduction and Notes. [*In the press.*

*** *Other volumes are in active preparation.*

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 6*s.*

Fairholt's Tobacco:

Its History and Associations; with an Account of the Plant and its Manufacture, and its Modes of Use in all Ages and Countries. By F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A. A New Edition, with Coloured Frontispiece and upwards of 100 Illustrations by the Author.

"*A very pleasant and instructive history of tobacco and its associations, which we cordially recommend alike to the votaries and to the enemies of the much-maligned but certainly not neglected weed. . . . Full of interest and information.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 4s. 6d.

Faraday's Chemical History of a Candle.

Lectures delivered to a Juvenile Audience. A New Edition. Edited by W. CROOKES, F.C.S. With numerous Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 4s. 6d.

Faraday's Various Forces of Nature.

A New Edition. Edited by W. CROOKES, F.C.S. With numerous Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

Finger-Ring Lore:

Historical, Legendary, and Anecdotal.—Earliest Notices; Superstitions; Ring Investiture, Secular and Ecclesiastical; Betrothal and Wedding Rings; Ring-tokens; Memorial and Mortuary Rings; Posy-Rings; Customs and Incidents in Connection with Rings; Remarkable Rings, &c. By WILLIAM JONES, F.S.A. With Hundreds of Illustrations of Curious Rings of all Ages and Countries.

"Enters fully into the whole subject, and gives an amount of information and general reading in reference thereto which is of very high interest. The book is not only a sort of history of finger-rings, but is a collection of anecdotes in connection with them. . . . The volume is admirably illustrated, and altogether affords an amount of amusement and information which is not otherwise easily accessible."—SCOTSMAN.

"One of those gossiping books which are as full of amusement as of instruction."—ATHENÆUM.

THE RUSKIN GRIMM.—Square crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s. 6d.; gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

German Popular Stories.

Collected by the Brothers GRIMM, and Translated by EDGAR TAYLOR. Edited, with an Introduction, by JOHN RUSKIN. With 22 Illustrations after the inimitable designs of GEORGE CRUIKSHANK. Both Series Complete.

"The illustrations of this volume . . . . are of quite sterling and admirable art, of a class precisely parallel in elevation to the character of the tales which they illustrate; and the original etchings, as I have before said in the Appendix to my 'Elements of Drawing,' were unrivalled in masterfulness of touch since Rembrandt (in some qualities of delineation, unrivalled even by him). . . . To make somewhat enlarged copies of them, looking at them through a magnifying glass, and never putting two lines where Cruikshank has put only one, would be an exercise in decision and severe drawing which would leave afterwards little to be learnt in schools."—Extract from Introduction by JOHN RUSKIN.

One Vol. crown 8vo, cloth extra, 9s.

Gilbert's (W. S.) Original Plays:

"A Wicked World," "Charity," "The Palace of Truth," "Pygmalion," "Trial by Jury," &c.

"His workmanship is in its way perfect; it is very sound, very even, very well sustained, and excellently balanced throughout."—OBSERVER.

One Shilling Monthly, Illustrated by ARTHUR HOPKINS.

The Gentleman's Magazine.

Edited by SYLVANUS URBAN, Gentleman.

In seeking to restore the "GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE" to the position it formerly held, the Publishers do not lose sight of the changed conditions under which it now appears. While maintaining an historical continuity which dates back to the reign of George the Second, there will be no attempt to burden the present with the weight of a distant past, or to adhere slavishly to traditions the application of which is unsuited to the altered conditions of society at the present time. It is sought to render the Magazine to the gentleman of to-day what in earlier times it proved to the gentleman of a past generation. New features will be introduced to take the place of those which disappear; in the most important respects, however, the connecting links between the present and the past will be closest. Biography and History, which have always formed a conspicuous portion of the contents, will retain the prominence assigned them, and will be treated with the added breadth that springs from increased familiarity with authorities and more exact appreciation of the province of the Biographer and the Historian. Science, which confers upon the age special eminence, will have its latest conclusions and forecasts presented in a manner which shall bring them within the grasp of the general reader. The philosophical aspect of Politics, the matters which affect Imperial interests, will be separated from the rivalries of party, and will receive a due share of attention. Archæology (under which comprehensive head may be included Genealogy, Topography, and other similar matters), Natural History, Sport and Adventure, Poetry, Belles Lettres, Art in all its manifestations, will constitute a portion of the contents; and Essays upon social subjects will, as heretofore, be interspersed. Under the head of Table Talk matters of current interest will be discussed, and facts of historic value will be preserved. A Work of Fiction by some novelist of highest position will run through the pages of the Magazine, and will be illustrated by artists of known excellence. With a full sense of what is involved in their promise, and with a firm resolution to abide by their pledges, the Publishers undertake to spare no exertion that is necessary to secure the highest class of contributions, to place the Magazine in the first rank of serials, and to fit it to take its place on the table and on the shelves of all classes of cultivated Englishmen.

*** *Now ready, the Volume for* JULY *to* DECEMBER, 1877, *cloth extra, price* 8*s.* 6*d.*; *and Cases for binding, price* 2*s. each.*

Demy 4to, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 31*s.* 6*d.*

Gillray the Caricaturist:

The Story of his Life and Times, with Anecdotal Descriptions of his Engravings. Edited by THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A., F.S.A. With 83 full-page Plates, and numerous Wood Engravings.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with a Map, 3*s.* 6*d.*

Gold;

or, Legal Regulations for the Standard of Gold and Silver Ware in the different Countries of the World. Translated from the German of STUDNITZ by Mrs. BREWER, and Edited, with additions, by EDWIN W. STREETER.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt and gilt edges, 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Golden Treasury of Thought:

AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF QUOTATIONS from Writers of all Times and Countries. Selected and Edited by THEODORE TAYLOR.

Square 16mo (Tauchnitz size), cloth extra, 2s. per volume

The Golden Library:

Bayard Taylor's Diversions of the Echo Club.

The Book of Clerical Anecdotes.

Byron's Don Juan.

Carlyle (Thomas) on the Choice of Books. With a Memoir. 1s. 6d.

Emerson's Letters and Social Aims.

Godwin's (William) Lives of the Necromancers.

Holmes's Autocrat of the Breakfast Table. With an Introduction by G. A. SALA.

Holmes's Professor at the Breakfast Table.

Hood's Whims and Oddities. Complete. With all the original Illustrations.

Irving's (Washington) Tales of a Traveller.

Irving's (Washington) Tales of the Alhambra.

Jesse's (Edward) Scenes and Occupations of Country Life.

Lamb's Essays of Elia. Both Series Complete in One Vol.

Leigh Hunt's Essays: A Tale for a Chimney Corner, and other Pieces. With Portrait, and Introduction by EDMUND OLLIER

Mallory's (Sir Thomas) Mort d'Arthur: The Stories of King Arthur and of the Knights of the Round Table. Edited by B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

Pascal's Provincial Letters. A New Translation, with Historical Introduction and Notes, by T. M'CRIE, D.D., LL.D.

Pope's Complete Poetical Works.

Rochefoucauld's Maxims and Moral Reflections. With Notes, and an Introductory Essay by SAINTE-BEUVE.

St. Pierre's Paul and Virginia, and the Indian Cottage. Edited, with Life, by the Rev. E. CLARKE.

Shelley's Early Poems and Queen Mab, with Essay by LEIGH HUNT.

Shelley's Later Poems: Laon and Cythna, &c.

Shelley's Posthumous Poems, the Shelley Papers, &c.

Shelley's Prose Works, including A Refutation of Deism, Zastrozzi, St. Irvyne, &c.

White's Natural History of Selborne. Edited, with additions, by THOMAS BROWN, F.L.S.

"A series of excellently printed and carefully annotated volumes, handy in size, and altogether attractive."—BOOKSELLER.

Small 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

Gosse's King Erik:

A Tragedy. By EDMUND W. GOSSE. Vignette by W. B. SCOTT.

"We have seldom seen so marked an advance in a second book beyond a first. Its merits are solid and of a very high order."—ACADEMY.

Small 8vo, cloth gilt, 5*s*.

Gosse's On Viol and Flute.

Second Edition. With a Vignette by W. B. SCOTT.

Half-bound, paper boards, 21*s*.; or elegantly half-bound crimson morocco, gilt, 25*s*.

The Graphic Portfolio.

Fifty Engravings from "The Graphic," most carefully printed on the finest plate paper (18 in. by 15 in.) from the Original Engravings. The Drawings are by S. L. FILDES, HELEN PATERSON, HUBERT HERKOMER, SYDNEY HALL, E. J. GREGORY, G. D. LESLIE, W. SMALL, G. DU MAURIER, Sir JOHN GILBERT, G. J. PINWELL, CHARLES GREEN, G. DURAND, M. E. EDWARDS, A. B. HOUGHTON, H. S. MARKS, F. W. LAWSON, H. WEIGALL, and others.

"*Contains some of the choicest specimens, both of drawing and wood-engraving. Admirable in details and expression, and engraved with rare delicacy.*"—DAILY NEWS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Greenwood's Low-Life Deeps:

An Account of the Strange Fish to be found there; including "The Man and Dog Fight," with much additional and confirmatory evidence; "With a Tally-Man," "A Fallen Star," "The Betting Barber," "A Coal Marriage," &c. By JAMES GREENWOOD. With Illustrations in tint by ALFRED CONCANEN.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Greenwood's Wilds of London:

Descriptive Sketches, from Personal Observations and Experience, of Remarkable Scenes, People, and Places in London. By JAMES GREENWOOD. With 12 Tinted Illustrations by ALFRED CONCANEN.

"*Mr. James Greenwood presents himself once more in the character of 'one whose delight it is to do his humble endeavour towards exposing and extirpating social abuses and those hole-and-corner evils which afflict society.'*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 4*s*. 6*d*.

Guyot's Earth and Man;

or, Physical Geography in its Relation to the History of Mankind. With Additions by Professors AGASSIZ, PIERCE, and GRAY. 12 Maps and Engravings on Steel, some Coloured, and a copious Index.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6*s*.

Hake's New Symbols:

Poems. By THOMAS GORDON HAKE.

"*The entire book breathes a pure and ennobling influence, shows welcome originality of idea and illustration, and yields the highest proof of imaginative faculty and mature power of expression.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Medium 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Hall's (Mrs. S. C.) Sketches of Irish Character.

With numerous Illustrations on Steel and Wood by DANIEL MACLISE, Sir JOHN GILBERT, W. HARVEY, and G. CRUIKSHANK.

"*The Irish Sketches of this lady resemble Miss Mitford's beautiful English Sketches in 'Our Village,' but they are far more vigorous and picturesque and bright.*"—BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

Three Vols. royal 4to, cloth boards, £6 6*s*.

Historical Portraits;

Upwards of 430 Engravings of Rare Prints. Comprising the Collections of RODD, RICHARDSON, CAULFIELD, &c. With Descriptive Text to every Plate, giving a brief outline of the most important Historical and Biographical Facts and Dates connected with each Portrait, and references to original Authorities.

Small 8vo, cloth limp, with Illustrations, 2*s*. 6*d*.

The House of Life;

Human Physiology, with its Applications to the Preservation of Health. For use in Classes, and Popular Reading. With numerous Illustrations. By Mrs. F. FENWICK MILLER.

Two Vols. royal 8vo, with Coloured Frontispieces, cloth extra, £2 5*s*.

Hope's Costume of the Ancients.

Illustrated in upwards of 320 Outline Engravings, containing Representations of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Habits and Dresses.

"*The substance of many expensive works, containing all that may be necessary to give to artists, and even to dramatic performers and to others engaged in classical representations, an idea of ancient costumes sufficiently ample to prevent their offending in their performances by gross and obvious blunders.*

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Hood's (Thomas) Choice Works,

In Prose and Verse. Including the CREAM OF THE COMIC ANNUALS. With Life of the Author, Portrait, and over Two Hundred original Illustrations.

"*Not only does the volume include the better-known poems by the author, but also what is happily described as 'the Cream of the Comic Annuals.' Such delicious things as 'Don't you smell Fire?' 'The Parish Revolution,' and 'Huggins and Duggins, will never want readers.*"—GRAPHIC.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Photographic Portrait, 6*s.*

Hood's (Tom) Poems, Humorous and Pathetic.

Edited, with a Memoir, by his Sister, FRANCES FREELING BRODERIP.

"*There are many poems in the volume which the very best judge might well mistake for his father's work.*"—STANDARD.

Square crown 8vo, in a handsome and specially-designed binding, gilt edges, 6*s.*

Hood's (Tom) From Nowhere to the North Pole:

A Noah's Arkæological Narrative. With 25 Illustrations by W. BRUNTON and E. C. BARNES.

"*The amusing letterpress is profusely interspersed with the jingling rhymes which children love and learn so easily. Messrs. Brunton and Barnes do full justice to the writer's meaning, and a pleasanter result of the harmonious co-operation of author and artist could not be desired.*"—TIMES.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Hook's (Theodore) Choice Humorous Works,

including his Ludicrous Adventures, Bons-mots, Puns, and Hoaxes. With a new Life of the Author, Portraits, Facsimiles, and Illustrations.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Hueffer's The Troubadours:

A History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages. By FRANCIS HUEFFER.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s.*

Horne's Orion:

An Epic Poem, in Three Books. By RICHARD HENGIST HORNE. Tenth Edition.

"*Orion will be admitted, by every man of genius, to be one of the noblest, if not the very noblest, poetical work of the age. Its defects are trivial and conventional, its beauties intrinsic and supreme.*"—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Howell's The Conflicts of Capital and Labour.

Including Chapters on the History of Guilds; Trades Unions; Apprentices; Technical Education; Intimidation and Picketing; Restraints on Trade; Strikes—their Objects, Aims, and Results; Trade Councils; Arbitration; Co-operation; Friendly Societies; the Labour Laws, &c. By GEORGE HOWELL, Author of "A Handy Book of the Labour Laws," late Parliamentary Secretary to the Trades Unions of Great Britain.

Atlas folio, half morocco, gilt, £5 5s.

The Italian Masters:

Autotype Facsimiles of Original Drawings in the British Museum. With Critical and Descriptive Notes, Biographical and Artistic, by J. COMYNS CARR.

"*This splendid volume. . . Mr. Carr's choice of examples has been dictated by wide knowledge and fine tact. . . The majority have been reproduced with remarkable accuracy. Of the criticism which accompanies the drawings we have not hitherto spoken, but it is this which gives the book its special value.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Small 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Jeux d'Esprit,

Written and Spoken, of the Later Wits and Humourists. Collected and Edited by HENRY S. LEIGH.

"*This thoroughly congenial piece of work . . . Mr. Leigh's claim to praise is threefold: he has performed the duty of taster with care and judgment; he has restored many stolen or strayed bons-mots to their rightful owners; and he has exercised his editorial functions delicately and sparingly.*"—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Two Vols. 8vo, with 52 Illustrations and Maps, cloth extra, gilt, 14s.

Josephus's Complete Works.

Translated by WHISTON. Containing both "The Antiquities of the Jews," and "The Wars of the Jews."

Small 8vo, cloth, full gilt, gilt edges, with Illustrations, 6s.

Kavanaghs' Pearl Fountain,

And other Fairy Stories. By BRIDGET and JULIA KAVANAGH. With Thirty Illustrations by J. MOYR SMITH.

"*Genuine new fairy stories of the old type, some of them as delightful as the best of Grimm's 'German Popular Stories.' . . . . For the most part, the stories are downright, thorough-going fairy stories of the most admirable kind. . . . . Mr. Moyr Smith's illustrations, too, are admirable. Look at that white rabbit. Anyone would see at the first glance that he is a rabbit with a mind, and a very uncommon mind too—that he is a fairy rabbit, and that he is posing as chief adviser to some one—without reading even a word of the story. Again, notice the fairy-like effect of the little picture of the fairy-bird 'Don't-forget-me,' flying away back into fairy-land. A more perfectly dream-like impression of fairy-land has hardly been given in any illustration of fairy tales within our knowledge.*"—SPECTATOR.

Small 8vo, cloth extra, 5*s*.

Lamb's Poetry for Children, and Prince Dorus.

Carefully reprinted from unique copies.

"*The quaint and delightful little book, over the recovery of which all the hearts of his lovers are yet warm with rejoicing.*"—Mr. SWINBURNE, in the ATHENÆUM.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Portraits, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Lamb's Complete Works,

In Prose and Verse, reprinted from the Original Editions, with many Pieces hitherto unpublished. Edited, with Notes and Introduction, by R. H. SHEPHERD. With Two Portraits and Facsimile of a page of the "Essay on Roast Pig."

"*A complete edition of Lamb's writings, in prose and verse, has long been wanted, and is now supplied. The editor appears to have taken great pains to bring together Lamb's scattered contributions, and his collection contains a number of pieces which are now reproduced for the first time since their original appearance in various old periodicals.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Illustrations, 10*s*. 6*d*.

Mary & Charles Lamb:

Their Poems, Letters, and Remains. With Reminiscences and Notes by W. CAREW HAZLITT. With HANCOCK'S Portrait of the Essayist, Facsimiles of the Title-pages of the rare First Editions of Lamb's and Coleridge's Works, and numerous Illustrations.

"*Very many passages will delight those fond of literary trifles; hardly any portion will fail in interest for lovers of Charles Lamb and his sister.*"—STANDARD.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, with Maps and Illustrations, 18*s*.

Lamont's Yachting in the Arctic Seas;

or, Notes of Five Voyages of Sport and Discovery in the Neighbourhood of Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya. By JAMES LAMONT, F.R.G.S. With numerous full-page Illustrations by Dr. LIVESAY.

"*After wading through numberless volumes of icy fiction, concocted narrative, and spurious biography of Arctic voyagers, it is pleasant to meet with a real and genuine volume. . . He shows much tact in recounting his adventures, and they are so interspersed with anecdotes and information as to make them anything but wearisome. . . . The book, as a whole, is the most important addition made to our Arctic literature for a long time.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Latter-Day Lyrics:

Poems of Sentiment and Reflection by Living Writers; selected and arranged, with Notes, by W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. With a Note "On some Old French Forms of Verse" by AUSTIN DOBSON.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 8s. 6d.

Lee's More Glimpses of the World Unseen.

Edited by the Rev. FREDERICK GEORGE LEE, D.C.L., Vicar of All Saints', Lambeth; Editor of "The Other World; or, Glimpses of the Supernatural," &c.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

Life in London;

or, The History of Jerry Hawthorn and Corinthian Tom. With the whole of CRUIKSHANK'S Illustrations, in Colours, after the Originals.

Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

Linton's Joshua Davidson,

Christian and Communist. By E. LYNN LINTON. Sixth Edition, with a New Preface.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

Longfellow's Complete Prose Works.

Including "Outre Mer," "Hyperion," "Kavanagh," "The Poets and Poetry of Europe," and "Driftwood." With Portrait and Illustrations by VALENTINE BROMLEY.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

Longfellow's Poetical Works.

Carefully Reprinted from the Original Editions. With numerous fine Illustrations on Steel and Wood.

"Mr. Longfellow has for many years been the best known and the most read of American poets; and his popularity is of the right kind, and rightly and fairly won. He has not stooped to catch attention by artifice, nor striven to force it by violence. His works have faced the test of parody and burlesque (which in these days is almost the common lot of writings of any mark), and have come off unharmed."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

THE FRASER PORTRAITS.—Demy 4to, cloth gilt and gilt edges, with 83 characteristic Portraits, 31s. 6d.

Maclise's Gallery of Illustrious Literary

Characters. With Notes by Dr. MAGINN. Edited, with copious Additional Notes, by WILLIAM BATES, B.A.

"One of the most interesting volumes of this year's literature."—TIMES.

"Deserves a place on every drawing-room table, and may not unfitly be removed from the drawing-room to the library."—SPECTATOR.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 2s. 6d.

Madre Natura v. The Moloch of Fashion.

By LUKE LIMNER. With 32 Illustrations by the Author. FOURTH EDITION, revised and enlarged.

"Agreeably written and amusingly illustrated. Common sense and erudition are brought to bear on the subjects discussed in it."—LANCET.

Handsomely printed in facsimile, price 5*s*.

Magna Charta.

An exact Facsimile of the Original Document in the British Museum, printed on fine plate paper, nearly 3 feet long by 2 feet wide, with the Arms and Seals of the Barons emblazoned in Gold and Colours.

*** A full Translation, with Notes, on a large sheet, 6*d*.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Maid of Norway (The).

Translated from the German by Mrs. BIRKBECK. With Pen and Ink Sketches of Norwegian Scenery.

NEW COPYRIGHT WORK BY MARK TWAIN.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2*s*.

An Idle Excursion, and other Papers.

By MARK TWAIN.

Small 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Mark Twain's Adventures of Tom Sawyer.

With One Hundred Illustrations.

"*A book to be read. There is a certain freshness and novelty about it, a practically romantic character, so to speak, which will make it very attractive.*"—SPECTATOR.

*** Also a Popular Edition, post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Mark Twain's Choice Works.

Revised and Corrected throughout by the Author. With Life, Portrait, and numerous Illustrations.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2*s*.

Mark Twain's Pleasure Trip on the Continent of Europe.

("The Innocents Abroad," and "The New Pilgrim's Progress.")

Two Vols. crown 8vo, cloth extra, 18*s*.

Marston's (Dr. Westland) Dramatic and Poetical Works.

Collected Library Edition.

"*The 'Patrician's Daughter' is an oasis in the desert of modern dramatic literature, a real emanation of mind. We do not recollect any modern work in which states of thought are so freely developed, except the 'Torquato Tasso' of Goethe. The play is a work of art in the same sense that a play of Sophocles is a work of art; it is one simple idea in a state of gradual development . . . 'The Favourite of Fortune' is one of the most important additions to the stock of English prose comedy that has been made during the present century.*"—TIMES.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 8*s*.

Marston's (Philip B.) All in All:

Poems and Sonnets.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 8*s*.

Marston's (Philip B.) Song Tide,

And other Poems. Second Edition.

Handsomely half-bound, India Proofs, royal folio, £10; Large Paper copies, Artists' India Proofs, elephant folio, £20.

Modern Art:

A Series of superb Line Engravings, from the Works of Distinguished Painters of the English and Foreign Schools, selected from Galleries and Private Collections in Great Britain. With descriptive Text by JAMES DAFFORNE.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, gilt edges, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Muses of Mayfair:

Vers de Société of the Nineteenth Century. Including Selections from TENNYSON, BROWNING, SWINBURNE, ROSSETTI, JEAN INGELOW, LOCKER, INGOLDSBY, HOOD, LYTTON, C. S. C.; LANDOR, AUSTIN DOBSON, &c. Edited by H. C. PENNELL.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6*s*., a New and Cheaper Edition of

The New Republic;

or, Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House. By W. H. MALLOCK.

"*The great charm of the book lies in the clever and artistic way the dialogue is managed, and the diverse and various expedients by which, whilst the love of thought on every page is kept at a high pitch, it never loses its realistic aspect. . . . It is giving high praise to a work of this sort to say that it absolutely needs to be taken as a whole, and that disjointed extracts here and there would entirely fail to convey any idea of the artistic unity, the careful and conscientious sequence of what is evidently the brilliant outcome of much patient thought and study. . . . Enough has now been said to recommend these volumes to any reader who desires something above the usual novel, something which will open up lanes of thought in his own mind, and insensibly introduce a higher standard into his daily life. . . . Here is novelty indeed, as well as originality, and to anyone who can appreciate or understand 'The New Republic,' it cannot fail to be a rare treat.*"—OBSERVER.

*** *The* ORIGINAL EDITION, *in Two Vols. crown* 8*vo*, 21*s*., *may also be had.*

Square 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Illustrations, 9*s*.

North Italian Folk.

By Mrs. COMYNS CARR. With Illustrations by RANDOLPH CALDECOTT.

MOORE'S HITHERTO UNCOLLECTED WRITINGS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Frontispiece, 9*s.*

Prose and Verse—Humorous, Satirical,

and Sentimental—by THOMAS MOORE. Including Suppressed Passages from the Memoirs of Lord Byron. Chiefly from the Author's MSS., and all hitherto Inedited and Uncollected. Edited, with Notes, by RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD.

"*Hitherto Thomas Moore has been mostly regarded as one of the lighter writers merely—a sentimental poet* par excellence, *in whom the 'rapture of love and of wine' determined him strictly to certain modes of sympathy and of utterance, and these to a large extent of a slightly artificial character. This volume will serve to show him in other, and certainly as attractive, aspects, while, at the same time, enabling us to a considerable extent to see how faithfully he developed himself on the poetical or fanciful side. . . . This is a book which claims, as it ought to obtain, various classes of readers, and we trust that the very mixed elements of interest in it may not conflict with its obtaining them. For the lightest reader there is much to enjoy; for the most thoughtful something to ponder over; and the thanks of both are due to editor and publisher alike.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Vignette Portraits, price 6*s.* per Vol.

The Old Dramatists:

Ben Jonson's Works.

With Notes, Critical and Explanatory, and a Biographical Memoir by WILLIAM GIFFORD. Edited by Col. CUNNINGHAM. Three Vols.

Chapman's Works.

Now First Collected. Complete in Three Vols. Vol. I. contains the Plays complete, including the doubtful ones; Vol. II. the Poems and Minor Translations, with an Introductory Essay by ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE; Vol. III. the Translations of the Iliad and Odyssey.

Marlowe's Works.

Including his Translations. Edited, with Notes and Introduction, by Col. CUNNINGHAM. One Vol.

Massinger's Plays.

From the Text of WILLIAM GIFFORD. With the addition of the Tragedy of "Believe as you List." Edited by Col. CUNNINGHAM. One Vol.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 6*s.*

O'Shaughnessy's (Arthur) An Epic of

Women, and other Poems. Second Edition.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 10*s.* 6*d.*

O'Shaughnessy's Lays of France.

(Founded on the "Lays of Marie.") Second Edition.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s.* 6*d.*

O'Shaughnessy's Music and Moonlight:

Poems and Songs.

Crown 8vo, illustrated boards, with numerous Plates, 2*s.* 6*d.*

Old Point Lace, and How to Copy and

Imitate It. By DAISY WATERHOUSE HAWKINS. With 17 Illustrations by the Author.

Crown 8vo, carefully printed on creamy paper, and tastefully bound in cloth for the Library, price 6s. each.

The Piccadilly Novels:

Popular Stories by the Best Authors.

Antonina. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir J. GILBERT and ALFRED CONCANEN.

Basil. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and J. MAHONEY.

Hide and Seek. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and J. MAHONEY.

The Dead Secret. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and H. FURNISS.

Queen of Hearts. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir J. GILBERT and A. CONCANEN.

My Miscellanies. By WILKIE COLLINS.
With Steel Portrait, and Illustrations by A. CONCANEN.

The Woman in White. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by Sir J. GILBERT and F. A. FRASER.

The Moonstone. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and F. A. FRASER.

Man and Wife. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by WILLIAM SMALL.

Poor Miss Finch. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and EDWARD HUGHES.

Miss or Mrs.? By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by S. L. FILDES and HENRY WOODS.

The New Magdalen. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and C. S. RANDS.

The Frozen Deep. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and J. MAHONEY.

The Law and the Lady. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Illustrated by S. L. FILDES and SYDNEY HALL.

The Two Destinies. By WILKIE COLLINS.

*** Also a **POPULAR EDITION** of **WILKIE COLLINS'S NOVELS**, post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Felicia. By M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.
With a Frontispiece by W. BOWLES.
"A noble novel. Its teaching is elevated, its story is sympathetic, and the kind of feeling its perusal leaves behind is that more ordinarily derived from music or poetry than from prose fiction. Few works in modern fiction stand as high in our estimation as this."—SUNDAY TIMES.

Olympia. By R. E. FRANCILLON.

THE PICCADILLY NOVELS—*continued.*

Under the Greenwood Tree. By THOMAS HARDY.

Fated to be Free. By JEAN INGELOW.

The Queen of Connaught. By HARRIETT JAY.

The Dark Colleen. By HARRIETT JAY.

"*A novel which possesses the rare and valuable quality of novelty. . . . The scenery will be strange to most readers, and in many passages the aspects of Nature are very cleverly described. Moreover, the book is a study of a very curious and interesting state of society. A novel which no novel-reader should miss, and which people who generally shun novels may enjoy.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Patricia Kemball. By E. LYNN LINTON.

With Frontispiece by G. DU MAURIER.

"*Displays genuine humour, as well as keen social observation. Enough graphic portraiture and witty observation to furnish materials for half-a-dozen novels of the ordinary kind.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

The Atonement of Leam Dundas. By E. LYNN LINTON.

With a Frontispiece by HENRY WOODS.

"*In her narrowness and her depth, in her boundless loyalty, her self-forgetting passion, that exclusiveness of love which is akin to cruelty, and the fierce humility which is vicarious pride, Leam Dundas is a striking figure. In one quality the authoress has in some measure surpassed herself.*"—PALL MALL GAZ.

The Waterdale Neighbours. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

My Enemy's Daughter. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

Linley Rochford. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

A Fair Saxon. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

Dear Lady Disdain. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

The Evil Eye, and other Stories. By KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

Illustrated by THOMAS R. MACQUOID and PERCY MACQUOID.

"*Cameos delicately, if not very minutely or vividly, wrought, and quite finished enough to give a pleasurable sense of artistic ease and faculty. A word of commendation is merited by the illustrations.*"—ACADEMY.

Number Seventeen. By HENRY KINGSLEY.

Oakshott Castle. By HENRY KINGSLEY.

With a Frontispiece by SHIRLEY HODSON.

"*A brisk and clear north wind of sentiment—sentiment that braces instead of enervating—blows through all his works, and makes all their readers at once healthier and more glad.*"—SPECTATOR.

Open! Sesame! By FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Illustrated by F. A. FRASER.

"*A story which arouses and sustains the reader's interest to a higher degree than, perhaps, any of its author's former works.*"—GRAPHIC.

Whiteladies. By Mrs. OLIPHANT.

With Illustrations by A. HOPKINS and H. WOODS.

"*A pleasant and readable book, written with practical ease and grace.*"—TIMES.

The Best of Husbands. By JAMES PAYN.

Illustrated by J. MOYR SMITH.

Fallen Fortunes. By JAMES PAYN.

THE PICCADILLY NOVELS—*continued.*

Halves. By JAMES PAYN.
With a Frontispiece by J. MAHONEY.

Walter's Word. By JAMES PAYN.
Illustrated by J. MOYR SMITH.

What he Cost her. By JAMES PAYN.

"*His novels are always commendable in the sense of art. They also possess another distinct claim to our liking: the girls in them are remarkably charming and true to nature, as most people, we believe, have the good fortune to observe nature represented by girls.*"—SPECTATOR.

Her Mother's Darling. By Mrs. J. H. RIDDELL

The Way we Live Now. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.
With Illustrations.

The American Senator. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

"*Mr. Trollope has a true artist's idea of tone, of colour, of harmony: his pictures are one, and seldom out of drawing; he never strains after effect, is fidelity itself in expressing English life, is never guilty of caricature.*"—FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

Diamond Cut Diamond. By T. A. TROLLOPE.

"*Full of life, of interest, of close observation, and sympathy. . . . When Mr. Trollope paints a scene it is sure to be a scene worth painting.*"—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Bound to the Wheel. By JOHN SAUNDERS.

Guy Waterman. By JOHN SAUNDERS.

One Against the World. By JOHN SAUNDERS.

The Lion in the Path. By JOHN SAUNDERS.

"*A carefully written and beautiful story—a story of goodness and truth, which is yet as interesting as though it dealt with the opposite qualities. . . . The author of this really clever story has been at great pains to work out all its details with elaborate conscientiousness, and the result is a very vivid picture of the ways of life and habits of thought of a hundred and fifty years ago. . . . Certainly a very interesting book.*"—TIMES.

Ready-Money Mortiboy. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.

My Little Girl. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.

The Case of Mr. Lucraft. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.

This Son of Vulcan. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.

With Harp and Crown. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.

The Golden Butterfly. By W. BESANT and JAMES RICE.
With a Frontispiece by F. S. WALKER.

"'*The Golden Butterfly*' *will certainly add to the happiness of mankind, for defy anybody to read it with a gloomy countenance.*"—TIMES.

NEW NOVEL BY JUSTIN McCARTHY.

Two vols. 8vo, cloth extra, Illustrated, 21*s.*, the SECOND EDITION of

Miss Misanthrope.

By JUSTIN McCARTHY, Author of "Dear Lady Disdain," &c. With 12 Illustrations by ARTHUR HOPKINS.

"In 'Miss Misanthrope' Mr. McCarthy has added a new and delightful portrait to his gallery of Englishwomen. . . . It is a novel which may be sipped like choice wine; it is one to linger over and ponder; to be enjoyed like fine, sweet air, or good company, for it is pervaded by a perfume of honesty and humour, of high feeling, of kindly penetrating humour, of good sense, and wide knowledge of the world, of a mind richly cultivated and amply stored. There is scarcely a page in these volumes in which we do not find some fine remark or felicitous reflection of piercing, yet gentle and indulgent irony."—DAILY NEWS.

MRS. LINTON'S NEW NOVEL.

Two Vols. 8vo, cloth extra, Illustrated, 21*s.*, the SECOND EDITION of

The World Well Lost.

By E. LYNN LINTON, Author of "Patricia Kemball," &c. With 12 Illustrations by HENRY FRENCH and J. LAWSON.

"We are inclined to think that in this novel Mrs. Lynn Linton has reached a higher artistic mark than in any former one."—NONCONFORMIST.

"If Mrs. Linton had not already won a place among our foremost living novelists, she would have been entitled to it by her latest work of fiction—a book of singularly high and varied merit. The story rivets the attention of the reader at the outset, and holds him absorbed until the close."—SCOTSMAN.

NEW NOVEL BY THE AUTHOR OF "JULIET'S GUARDIAN."

Three Vols., crown 8vo, 31*s.* 6*d.*

Deceivers Ever.

By Mrs. H. LOVETT CAMERON.

Crown 8vo, red cloth, extra, 5*s.* each.

Ouida's Novels.—Uniform Edition.

Folle Farine.	By OUIDA.	*Pascarel.*	By OUIDA.
Idalia.	By OUIDA.	*Puck.*	By OUIDA.
Chandos.	By OUIDA.	*Dog of Flanders.*	By OUIDA.
Under Two Flags.	By OUIDA.	*Strathmore.*	By OUIDA.
Tricotrin.	By OUIDA.	*Two Wooden Shoes*	By OUIDA.
Cecil Castlemaine's Gage.	By OUIDA.	*Signa.*	By OUIDA.
Held in Bondage.	By OUIDA.	*In a Winter City.*	By OUIDA.
		Ariadnê.	By OUIDA.

NEW NOVEL BY MR. JAMES GRANT.

Shortly, Three Vols., crown 8vo, 31*s.* 6*d.*

The Lord Hermitage.

By JAMES GRANT, Author of "The Romance of War," &c.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Cheap Editions of Popular Novels.

[WILKIE COLLINS' NOVELS may also be had in cloth limp at 2s. 6d. *See, too, the* PICCADILLY NOVELS, *for Library Editions.*]

Under the Greenwood Tree. By THOMAS HARDY.
Ready-Money Mortiboy. By WALTER BESANT and JAMES RICE.
The Golden Butterfly. By Authors of "Ready-Money Mortiboy."
This Son of Vulcan. By the Authors of "Ready-Money Mortiboy."
My Little Girl. By the Authors of "Ready-Money Mortiboy."
The Case of Mr. Lucraft. Authors of "Ready-Money Mortiboy."
With Harp and Crown. Authors of "Ready-Money Mortiboy."
The Woman in White. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Antonina. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Basil. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Hide and Seek. By WILKIE COLLINS.
The Dead Secret. By WILKIE COLLINS.
The Queen of Hearts. By WILKIE COLLINS.
My Miscellanies. By WILKIE COLLINS.
The Moonstone. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Man and Wife. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Poor Miss Finch. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Miss or Mrs.? By WILKIE COLLINS.
The New Magdalen. By WILKIE COLLINS.
The Frozen Deep. By WILKIE COLLINS.
The Law and the Lady. By WILKIE COLLINS.
Gaslight and Daylight. By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.
The Waterdale Neighbours. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.
My Enemy's Daughter. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.
Linley Rochford. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.
A Fair Saxon. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.
Dear Lady Disdain. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY.
An Idle Excursion. By MARK TWAIN.
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. By MARK TWAIN.
A Pleasure Trip on the Continent of Europe. M. TWAIN.
Oakshott Castle. By HENRY KINGSLEY.
Bound to the Wheel. By JOHN SAUNDERS.
Guy Waterman. By JOHN SAUNDERS.
One Against the World. By JOHN SAUNDERS.
The Lion in the Path. By JOHN and KATHERINE SAUNDERS.
Surly Tim. By the Author of "That Lass o' Lowrie's."

Two Vols. 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 10*s.* 6*d.*

Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men.

Translated from the Greek, with Notes Critical and Historical, and a Life of Plutarch, by JOHN and WILLIAM LANGHORNE. New Edition, with Medallion Portraits.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Portrait and Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Poe's Choice Prose and Poetical Works.

With BAUDELAIRE'S "Essay."

"Poe stands as much alone among verse-writers as Salvator Rosa among painters."—SPECTATOR.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, Illustrated, 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Life of Edgar Allan Poe.

By WILLIAM F. GILL. With numerous Illustrations and Facsimiles.

Small 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Prince of Argolis:

A Story of the Old Greek Fairy Time. By J. MOYR SMITH. With 130 Illustrations by the Author.

Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Proctor's Myths and Marvels of Astronomy.

By RICHARD A. PROCTOR, Author of "Other Worlds than Ours," &c.

"Mr. Proctor, who is well and widely known for his faculty of popularising the latest results of the science of which he is a master, has brought together in these fascinating chapters a curious collection of popular beliefs concerning divination by the stars, the influences of the moon, the destination of the comets, the constellation figures, and the habitation of other worlds than ours."—DAILY NEWS.

"The reader who begins this charming volume—a dozen chapters to as many instances of erroneous observation or superstitious credulity—will hardly fail to peruse it to the end."—GRAPHIC.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5*s.*

Prometheus the Fire-Giver:

An attempted Restoration of the Lost First Part of the Trilogy of Æschylus.

"Another illustration of that classical revival which is due in no small degree to the influence of Mr. Swinburne. . . . Much really fine writing, and much appreciation of the Æschylean spirit."—HOME NEWS.

"Well written in parts—soft, spirited, and vigorous, according to requirement." ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Portrait and Facsimile, 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Final Reliques of Father Prout.

Collected and Edited, from MSS. supplied by the family of the Rev. FRANCIS MAHONY, by BLANCHARD JERROLD.

In Two Series, small 4to, blue and gold, gilt edges, 6*s.* each.

Puniana;

or, Thoughts Wise and Other-Why's. A New Collection of Riddles, Conundrums, Jokes, Sells, &c. In Two Series, each containing 3000 of the best Riddles, 10,000 most outrageous Puns, and upwards of Fifty beautifully executed Drawings by the Editor, the Hon. HUGH ROWLEY. Each Series is Complete in itself.

"*A witty, droll, and most amusing work, profusely and elegantly illustrated.*"—STANDARD.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Pursuivant of Arms;

or, Heraldry founded upon Facts. A Popular Guide to the Science of Heraldry. By J. R. PLANCHÉ, Esq., Somerset Herald. With Coloured Frontispiece, Plates, and 200 Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Rabelais' Works.

Faithfully Translated from the French, with variorum Notes, and numerous Characteristic Illustrations by GUSTAVE DORÉ.

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, with numerous Illustrations, and a beautifully executed Chart of the various Spectra, 7*s.* 6*d.*, a New Edition of

Rambosson's Astronomy.

By J. RAMBOSSON, Laureate of the Institute of France. Translated by C. B. PITMAN. Profusely Illustrated.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6*s.*

Red-Spinner's By Stream and Sea:

A Book for Wanderers and Anglers. By WILLIAM SENIOR (RED-SPINNER).

"*Mr. Senior has long been known as an interesting and original essayist. He is a keen observer, a confessed lover of 'the gentle sport,' and combines with a fine picturesque touch a quaint and efficient humour. All these qualities come out in a most attractive manner in this delightful volume. . . . It is pre-eminently a bright and breezy book, full of nature and odd out-of-the-way references. . . We can conceive of no better book for the holiday tour or the seaside.*"—NONCONFORMIST.

"*Very delightful reading; just the sort of book which an angler or a rambler will be glad to have in the side pocket of his jacket. Altogether, 'By Stream and Sea' is one of the best books of its kind which we have come across for many a long day.*"—OXFORD UNIVERSITY HERALD.

Handsomely printed, price 5*s*.

The Roll of Battle Abbey;

or, A List of the Principal Warriors who came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror, and Settled in this Country, A.D. 1066–7. Printed on fine plate paper, nearly three feet by two, with the principal Arms emblazoned in Gold and Colours.

In 4to, very handsomely printed, extra gold cloth, 12*s*.

The Roll of Caerlaverock.

The Oldest Heraldic Roll; including the Original Anglo-Norman Poem, and an English Translation of the MS. in the British Museum. By THOMAS WRIGHT, M.A. The Arms emblazoned in Gold and Colours.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s*. 6*d*.

Memoirs of the Sanson Family:

Seven Generations of Executioners. By HENRI SANSON. Translated from the French, with Introduction, by CAMILLE BARRÈRE.

"*A faithful translation of this curious work, which will certainly repay perusal—not on the ground of its being full of horrors, for the original author seems to be rather ashamed of the technical aspect of his profession, and is commendably reticent as to its details, but because it contains a lucid account of the most notable* causes célèbres *from the time of Louis XIV. to a period within the memory of persons still living. . . . Can scarcely fail to be extremely entertaining.*"—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, profusely Illustrated, 4*s*. 6*d*. each.

The "Secret Out" Series.

The Art of Amusing:

A Collection of Graceful Arts, Games, Tricks, Puzzles, and Charades. By FRANK BELLEW. 300 Illustrations.

Hanky-Panky:

Very Easy Tricks, Very Difficult Tricks, White Magic, Sleight of Hand. Edited by W. H. CREMER. 200 Illustrations.

Magician's Own Book:

Performances with Cups and Balls, Eggs, Hats, Handkerchiefs, &c. All from Actual Experience. Edited by W. H. CREMER. 200 Illustrations.

Magic No Mystery:

Tricks with Cards, Dice, Balls, &c., with fully descriptive Directions; the Art of Secret Writing; the Training of Performing Animals, &c. With Coloured Frontispiece and many Illustrations.

The Merry Circle:

A Book of New Intellectual Games and Amusements. By CLARA BELLEW. Many Illustrations.

The Secret Out:

One Thousand Tricks with Cards, and other Recreations; with Entertaining Experiments in Drawing-room or "White Magic." By W. H. CREMER. 300 Engravings.

NEW VOLUME OF THE "SECRET OUT" SERIES.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Plates, 4*s*. 6*d*.

The Pyrotechnist's Treasury;

or, Complete Art of Making Fireworks. By THOMAS KENT.

In reduced facsimile, small 8vo, half Roxburghe, 10*s.* 6*d.*

The First Folio Shakespeare.

Mr. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Published according to the true Originall Copies. London, Printed by ISAAC IAGGARD and ED. BLOUNT, 1623.—An exact Reproduction of the extremely rare original, in reduced facsimile by a photographic process—ensuring the strictest accuracy in every detail. *A full Prospectus will be sent upon application.*

"*To Messrs. Chatto and Windus belongs the merit of having done more to facilitate the critical study of the text of our great dramatist than all the Shakespeare clubs and societies put together. A complete facsimile of the celebrated First Folio edition of* 1623 *for half-a-guinea is at once a miracle of cheapness and enterprise. Being in a reduced form, the type is necessarily rather diminutive, but it is as distinct as in a genuine copy of the original, and will be found to be as useful and far more handy to the student than the latter.*"—ATHENÆUM.

Post 8vo, with Illustrations, cloth extra, gilt edges, 18*s.*

The Lansdowne Shakespeare.

Beautifully printed in red and black, in small but very clear type. With engraved facsimile of DROESHOUT'S Portrait, and 37 beautiful Steel Plates, after STOTHARD.

Two Vols. crown 8vo, cloth extra, 18*s.*

The School of Shakspere.

Including "The Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley," with a New Life of Stucley, from Unpublished Sources; "Nobody and Somebody," "Histriomastix," "The Prodigal Son," "Jack Drum's Entertainement," "A Warning for Fair Women," with Reprints of the Accounts of the Murder; and "Faire Em." Edited, with Introductions and Notes, and an Account of Robert Green and his Quarrels with Shakspere, by RICHARD SIMPSON, B.A., Author of "The Philosophy of Shakspere's Sonnets," "The Life of Campion," &c. With an Introduction by F. J. FURNIVALL.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Signboards:

Their History. With Anecdotes of Famous Taverns and Remarkable Characters. By JACOB LARWOOD and JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN. With nearly 100 Illustrations.

"*Even if we were ever so maliciously inclined, we could not pick out all Messrs. Larwood and Hotten's plums, because the good things are so numerous as to defy the most wholesale depredation.*"—TIMES.

Exquisitely printed in miniature, cloth extra, gilt edges, 2*s.* 6*d.*

The Smoker's Text-Book.

By J. HAMER, F.R.S.L.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with 10 full-page Tinted Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Sheridan's Complete Works,

with Life and Anecdotes. Including his Dramatic Writings, printed from the Original Editions, his Works in Prose and Poetry, Translations, Speeches, Jokes, Puns, &c.; with a Collection of Sheridaniana.

"*The editor has brought together within a manageable compass not only the seven plays by which Sheridan is best known, but a collection also of his poetical pieces which are less familiar to the public, sketches of unfinished dramas, selections from his reported witticisms, and extracts from his principal speeches. To these is prefixed a short but well-written memoir, giving the chief facts in Sheridan's literary and political career; so that, with this volume in his hand, the student may consider himself tolerably well furnished with all that is necessary for a general comprehension of the subject of it.*"—PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 6*s.* 6*d.*

The Slang Dictionary:

Etymological, Historical, and Anecdotal. An ENTIRELY NEW EDITION, revised throughout, and considerably Enlarged.

"*We are glad to see the Slang Dictionary reprinted and enlarged. From a high scientific point of view this book is not to be despised. Of course it cannot fail to be amusing also. It contains the very vocabulary of unrestrained humour, and oddity, and grotesqueness. In a word, it provides valuable material both for the student of language and the student of human nature.*"—ACADEMY.

Crown 4to, uniform with "Chaucer for Children," with Coloured Illustrations, cloth gilt, 10*s.* 6*d.*

Spenser for Children.

By M. H. TOWRY. With Illustrations in Colours by WALTER J. MORGAN.

"*In these transcripts the writer has endeavoured to preserve the thoughts and language of Spenser, while presenting the tales in a simple and continuous form. The work of one of our greatest poets has not been approached in an irreverent spirit, nor with any intention of vulgarizing his fictions by relating them in a familiar and mocking manner—a style too often supposed to be that most attractive to the young.*"

Imperial 4to, containing 150 beautifully-finished full-page Engravings and Nine Vignettes, all tinted, and some illuminated in gold and colours, half-morocco, £9 9*s.*

Stothard's Monumental Effigies of Great Britain.

With Historical Description and Introduction by JOHN KEMPE, F.S.A. A NEW EDITION, with a large body of Additional Notes by JOHN HEWITT.

*** A few Large Paper copies, royal folio, with the arms illuminated in gold and colours, and the plates very carefully finished in body-colours, heightened with gold in the very finest style, half-morocco, £15 15*s.*

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 9s.

Stedman's Victorian Poets:

Critical Essays. By EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

"We ought to be thankful to those who do critical work with competent skill and understanding, with honesty of purpose, and with diligence and thoroughness of execution. And Mr. Stedman, having chosen to work in this line, deserves the thanks of English scholars by these qualities and by something more; . . . . he is faithful, studious, and discerning."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

Large 8vo, half-Roxburghe, with Illustrations, price 9s.

Stow's Survey of London.

Edited by W. J. THOMS, F.S.A. A New Edition, with Copperplate Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

Swift's Choice Works,

in Prose and Verse. With Memoir, Portrait, and Facsimiles of the Maps in the Original Edition of "Gulliver's Travels."

"The 'Tale of a Tub' is, in my apprehension, the masterpiece of Swift; certainly Rabelais has nothing superior, even in invention, nor anything so condensed, so pointed, so full of real meaning, of biting satire, of felicitous analogy. The 'Battle of the Books' is such an improvement on the similar combat in the Lutrin, that we can hardly own it as an imitation."—HALLAM.

"Swift's reputation as a poet has been in a manner obscured by the greater splendour, by the natural force and inventive genius, of his prose writings; but, if he had never written either the 'Tale of a Tub' or 'Gulliver's Travels,' his name merely as a poet would have come down to us, and have gone down to posterity, with well-earned honours."—HAZLITT.

Mr. Swinburne's Works:

The Queen Mother and Rosamond. Fcap. 8vo, 5s.

Atalanta in Calydon. A New Edition. Crown 8vo, 6s.

Chastelard. A Tragedy. Fcap. 8vo, 7s.

Poems and Ballads. Fcap. 8vo, 9s.

Notes on "Poems and Ballads." 8vo, 1s.

William Blake: A Critical Essay. With Facsimile Paintings. Demy 8vo, 16s.

Songs before Sunrise. Crown 8vo, 10s. 6d.

Bothwell: A Tragedy. Two Vols. crown 8vo, 12s. 6d.

George Chapman: An Essay. Crown 8vo, 7s.

Songs of Two Nations. Crown 8vo, 6s.

Essays and Studies. Crown 8vo, 12s.

Erechtheus: A Tragedy. Crown 8vo, 6s.

Note of an English Republican on the Muscovite Crusade. 8vo, 1s.

A Note on Charlotte Brontë. Crown 8vo, 6s.

MR. SWINBURNE'S NEW WORK.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 9*s.*

Poems and Ballads. SECOND SERIES.

By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

*** Also in fcap. 8vo, at same price, uniform with the FIRST SERIES.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 3*s.* 6*d.*

Rossetti's (W. M.) Criticism upon Swinburne's "Poems and Ballads."

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the People of England; including the Rural and Domestic Recreations, May Games, Mummeries, Shows, Processions, Pageants, and Pompous Spectacles, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. With 140 Illustrations. Edited by WILLIAM HONE.

*** A few Large Paper Copies, with an extra set of Copperplate Illustrations, carefully Coloured by Hand, from the Originals, 50*s.*

Medium 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Dr. Syntax's Three Tours,

in Search of the Picturesque, in Search of Consolation, and in Search of a Wife. With the whole of ROWLANDSON'S droll page Illustrations, in Colours, and Life of the Author by J. C. HOTTEN.

Large post 8vo, cloth, full gilt, gilt top, with Illustrations, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Thackerayana:

Notes and Anecdotes Illustrated by a profusion of Sketches by WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, depicting Humorous Incidents in his School-life, and Favourite Characters in the books of his everyday reading. With Hundreds of Wood Engravings and Five Coloured Plates, from Mr. Thackeray's Original Drawings.

"It would have been a real loss to bibliographical literature had copyright difficulties deprived the general public of this very amusing collection. One of Thackeray's habits, from his schoolboy days, was to ornament the margins and blank pages of the books he had in use with caricature illustrations of their contents. This gave special value to the sale of his library, and is almost cause for regret that it could not have been preserved in its integrity. Thackeray's place in literature is eminent enough to have made this an interest to future generations. The anonymous editor has done the best that he could to compensate for the lack of this. It is an admirable addendum, not only to his collected works, but also to any memoir of him that has been, or that is likely to be, written."—BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt edges, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Thomson's Seasons and Castle of Indolence. With a Biographical and Critical Introduction by ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, and over 50 fine Illustrations on Steel and Wood.

Two Vols. crown 8vo, cloth boards, 18*s.*; Large Paper copies (only 50 printed), 36*s.*

Cyril Tourneur's Collected Works,

Plays and Poems. Edited, with Critical Introduction and Notes, by J. CHURTON COLLINS.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Coloured Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

J. M. W. Turner's Life and Correspondence.

Founded upon Letters and Papers furnished by his Friends and fellow Academicians. By WALTER THORNBURY. A New Edition, considerably Enlarged. With numerous Illustrations in Colours, facsimiled from Turner's original Drawings.

Taine's History of English Literature.

Translated by HENRY VAN LAUN. Four Vols. small 8vo, 30*s.*

*** **Also a New and Cheaper Edition, in Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 15s.**

Small 8vo, cloth gilt, with Portrait, 6*s.*

Thoreau: His Life and Aims.

A Study. By H. A. PAGE, Author of "The Life of Thomas De Quincey," &c.

EXTRACT FROM PREFACE.—"*The nature-instinct in Thoreau was so strong that, as I believe, it may even do something to aid in the interpretation of certain phenomena of so distant a period as the Middle Age. I see a kind of real likeness between this so-called 'Stoic' of America, with his unaffected love for the slave, his wonderful sympathies and attractions for the lower creatures, his simplicities, and his liking for the labour of the kand, and that St. Francis whose life has recently been made fresh and real to us by the skilful pen of Mrs. Oliphant. All I claim for Thoreau is a disinterested and not a one-sided and prejudiced hearing.*'

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Timbs' Clubs and Club Life in London.

With Anecdotes of its famous Coffee-houses, Hostelries, and Taverns. By JOHN TIMBS, F.S.A. With numerous Illustrations.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Timbs' English Eccentrics and Eccentricities:

Stories of Wealth and Fashion, Delusions, Impostures, and Fanatic Missions, Strange Sights and Sporting Scenes, Eccentric Artists, Theatrical Folks, Men of Letters, &c. By JOHN TIMBS, F.S.A. With nearly 50 Illustrations.

One Vol. crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Tom Taylor's Historical Plays.

"Clancarty," "Jeanne d'Arc," "'Twixt Axe and Crown," "The Fool's Revenge," "Arkwright's Wife," "Anne Boleyn," "Plot and Passion."

*** The Plays may also be had separately, at 1s. each.

Crown 4to, half-Roxburghe, 12*s.* 6*d.*

Vagabondiana ;

or, Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London ; with Portraits of the most Remarkable, drawn from the Life by JOHN THOMAS SMITH, late Keeper of the Prints in the British Museum. With Introduction by FRANCIS DOUCE, and Descriptive Text. With the Woodcuts and the 32 Plates, from the original Coppers.

Large crown 8vo, cloth antique, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Walton and Cotton's Complete Angler ;

or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation : being a Discourse of Rivers, Fishponds, Fish and Fishing, written by IZAAK WALTON ; and Instructions how to Angle for a Trout or Grayling in a clear Stream, by CHARLES COTTON. With Original Memoirs and Notes by Sir HARRIS NICOLAS, and 61 Copperplate Illustrations.

Carefully printed on paper to imitate the Original, 22 in. by 14 in., 2*s.*

Warrant to Execute Charles I.

An exact Facsimile of this important Document, with the Fifty-nine Signatures of the Regicides, and corresponding Seals.

Beautifully printed on paper to imitate the Original MS., price 2*s.*

Warrant to Execute Mary Q. of Scots.

An exact Facsimile, including the Signature of Queen Elizabeth, and a Facsimile of the Great Seal.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Wright's Caricature History of the Georges. (*The House of Hanover.*)

With 400 Pictures, Caricatures, Squibs, Broadsides, Window Pictures, &c. By THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

Large post 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with Illustrations, 7*s.* 6*d.*

Wright's History of Caricature and of the Grotesque in Art, Literature, Sculpture, and Painting,

from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. By THOMAS WRIGHT, M.A., F.S.A. Profusely illustrated by F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A.

J. OGDEN AND CO., PRINTERS, 172, ST. JOHN STREET, E.C.